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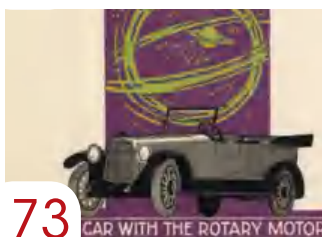
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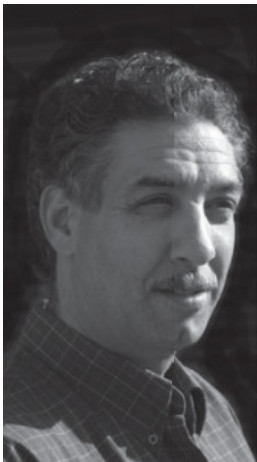
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Alternative Wagons

If you admire and appreciate station wagons as much as I do, but find some of the more fascinating Fifties-era wagons like the beautiful Pontiac Safari in this issue are now beyond your means, there are alternatives to consider. While these unconventional and somewhat quirky wagons may never be as desirable or valuable as, say, a 1957 Super 88 Fiesta, Caballero or Nomad, or a '61 New Yorker or Country Squire, you'd be surprised just how many "forgotten" station wagon models are still out there waiting to be restored and enjoyed. As always, a little out-of-the-mainstream thinking will net you a station wagon that will be way more interesting and unusual than the customary crop of collectible contenders.

Ford Falcon Compact In size with a pleasing style, be it the rounded shape of the early '60s models, the aggressive stance of the 1964-'65 offerings or the conservatively styled 1966-'69 cars, every Falcon wagon has a look all its own. They are easy to drive, thanks to their compact dimensions, and mechanically, they are almost bulletproof.

Rambler American A great alternative to the two-door Chevy Nomad is the two-door Rambler wagon from the '50s. Built through 1961, these compact, rounded gems are full of character, with an engaging style all their own. Mechanically, they are quite durable, easy to work on and fun to drive.

Studebaker Lark Another two-door wagon alternative is the 1959-'61 Lark, and the four-door '62 Lark wagons are similarly styled. All the '60s-era Studebaker wagons are well worth owning, distinctive looking and mechanically robust.

Mercury Comet Essentially a Falcon in disguise, the Comet version is a bit more lavish in its execution, with a slightly higher level of trim, but mechanically, they are nearly identical. So when was the last time you saw a Comet station wagon at a show? Exactly.

Ford Pinto Now that the most senior Pinto is already 46 years old, the car's reputation makes unfamiliar crowds gather around them wherever they go. Just look at owning a Pinto wagon as pure entertainment; with their appealing charm, they will win you and everyone else over.

Chrysler LeBaron/Dodge Diplomat/Plymouth Volaré While considered too new for some folks, these cars ride seriously well and now look oh-so-stylish. Any version with the 360-cu.in.

V-8 would be the one to own; however, even the 318 or the Slant Six models would be rewarding to drive.

Mercury Montego All the Montego wagons have great flair and a unique style, especially the 1970-'71 models with the pointed front ends; however, I find the understated sophistication of the 1968-'69 models very appealing. And they're the perfect size. Also consider the nicely appointed 1972-'76 models.

Skylark/Chevelle/Cutlass/Tempest/Le Mans Any of the 1964-'72 A-body wagons make excellent cars to own. Restoration and performance parts are plentiful, they are easy to work on, and most were powered by V-8s. And they all have that muscle car-era look about them.

Dodge Coronet The real sleepers in the Coronet line are the very handsome 1975-'76 models with the single headlamps and split grille. Well appointed, they have sufficient power and ride oh-so-comfortably.

Chevrolet Celebrity Aesthetically lackluster for collector-car guys, the entire line of Celebrity wagons nevertheless has a clean style; however, the striking Eurosport edition is the one to have. These are truly great-looking wagons that handle extremely well, with a contemporary flair about them that everyone admires. The V-6 engine is the preferred choice, as is the 1987-'88 Eurosport VR edition.

Pontiac 6000 Cousin to the Celebrity, the best 6000 wagon to own is the 1987-'88 S/E that came equipped with the STE engine. Their mid-size proportions make them easy to drive, which is complemented by excellent road holding characteristics.

Buick Roadmaster Want a factory-built hot rod? Then buy a 1994-'96 model with the 260hp LT1 V-8. With its four-speed 4L60 automatic transmission and outstanding fuel efficiency, this Roadmaster wagon makes an ideal long-distance highway hauler.

Chevrolet Vega The Vega Kamback was one of the best styled station wagons of all time, but rust issues and poor engines meant that most were scrapped. If you can find one today, you'll have a truly uncommon wagon that will be the talk of every car show you bring it to. Just swap in Pontiac's rugged Iron Duke four-cylinder, and you'll be able to drive it for the next hundred years. 🚗

Write to our executive editor at rlentinello@hemmings.com.



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Magnificat II and studied the escapement, balance wheel and the rotor. He remarked on the detailed guilloche face, gilt winding crown, and the crocodile-embossed leather band. He was intrigued by the three interior dials for day, date, and 24-hour moon phases. He estimated that this fine timepiece would cost over \$2,500. We all smiled and told him that the Stauer price was less than \$90. He was stunned. We felt like we had accomplished our task. A truly magnificent watch at a truly magnificent price!

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SoCal Superlatives



THE LA JOLLA CONCOURS D'ELEGANCE RETURNS FOR ITS 12TH YEAR AND WILL feature over 300 collector cars displayed along the Pacific Ocean. The event takes place at The Cove in La Jolla, just north of San Diego, on Sunday, April 10, and will be preceded by a Tour d'Elegance on Saturday. The concours will have over 30 classes, including this year's special marques: SoCal: Wagons, Woodies and Campers (1925-'65); Cars of Dr. Seuss; and Kaiser Darrin, Nash-Healey and Daimler SP250. For a full itinerary of the weekend's events and information, visit www.lajollaconcours.com.

APRIL Calendar

7-10 • AACA Southeastern Spring Meet
Charlotte, North Carolina • 717-534-1910
www.aaca.org

7-10 • Charlotte AutoFair
Charlotte, North Carolina • 704-841-1990
www.charlotte-autofair.com

10 • Super Sunday Swap Meet
Indianapolis, Indiana • 317-296-0336
www.supersundayindy.com

13-16 • Cadillac La Salle Club National Meet
Las Vegas, Nevada • 614-478-4622
www.lasvegasccl.org

15-17 • Englishtown Swap Meet
Old Bridge, New Jersey • 732-446-7800
www.etownraceway.com

20-24 • Spring Carlisle
Carlisle, Pennsylvania • 717-243-7855
www.carlisleevents.com

21 • 100th Anniversary Bankhead Highway Tour
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22-24 • Spring Jefferson Swap & Show
Jefferson, Wisconsin • 608-244-8416
www.madisonclassics.com

28-May 1 • Pate Swap Meet
Fort Worth, Texas • 713-649-0922
www.pateswapmeet.com

Early Ford National Meet

TULSA, OKLAHOMA, IS THE SITE FOR THE EARLY FORD V-8 Club's Central National Meet at the Tulsa Hard Rock Hotel, Resort and Casino this June 12-16. All meet activities except for the tours will take place at the Hard Rock location, including the swap meet, judged concours show and awards banquet. The tours will take in the Gilcrease Museum and the Woolaroc Museum and Wildlife Preserve, which feature a history of Phillips Petroleum and the pioneer days of air travel. Registration forms and information are available at www.earlyfordv8.org/early-ford-meets.cfm.





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Pulver Special



BURIED IN THE ARCHIVES OF DEWITT MILLER'S LATE UNCLE were these two photos, unlabeled, of an interesting race car and, possibly, an interesting race car driver.

"What is the race car?" DeWitt, of Albuquerque, asked us. "Is it something special or a common home-built dirt track racer? [And] the person on the right in one of the photos looks like a young Bobby Unser. Is it him? The photos would have to be from around 1950 for that to be true."

Tackling DeWitt's first question, we can guess that the car isn't all that common. A close look reveals that the engine has been turned around in the chassis to supply power to the front axle—what appears to be a homebuilt unit with independent front suspension and transverse leaf springs above and below it. Too bad the group of photos didn't include a look at the racer from the front.

As for the young man on the right, the resemblance is rather close. We would figure 1950 or thereabouts to be rather late for experiments in front-wheel drive in dirt track cars like this, but we found a newspaper mention of dirt track racer Matt Pulver in 1947, so the timeline could very well be right for that man on the right to be Unser.

Golden Oldie

AFTER WE RECENTLY ran a video on the *Hemmings Daily* from the November 1954 day that General Motors built its 50 millionth car, a few of our readers began to wonder what happened to that exact car, a 1955 Chevrolet Bel Air Sport Coupe two-door hardtop painted gold and fitted with gold-plated trim.

Sure, a few thousand other '55 Chevrolets got similar paint to commemorate the event, but

only one 50 millionth car was built, and apparently, GM sold it like any other '55 Chevrolet once its promotional duties wrapped up. Not without first removing the gold-plated trim and repainting it, of course.

Some reports put the

car in an unrestored, saved-from-the-junkyard state in North Carolina as late as 2011 or 2012, but it's gone underground since then. Or, at least, those are the rumors. Anybody with solid information on the car, let us know.



Packard Expansion

WE CAUGHT THIS IMAGE FLOATING AROUND

Tumblr recently and, like some other observers, had to wonder whether it depicted actual Packard styling mockups for a drastically expanded mid- to late-1950s range or whether it was all some slick Photoshop exercise.

Even if the latter case holds true, the images appear to have an historical basis. While planning their 1957 model line, officials at the combined Studebaker-Packard considered partnering with Ford to share a basic body shell between Packard and Ford's high-end brands. Diagrams from the time show numerous possible configurations for the shared body shell, including an "Express Coupe" sedan pickup. Curtiss-Wright, which came in and bought Studebaker-Packard not long after, nixed the plans before they got too far. Reportedly only one prototype, a crude sedan dubbed "Black Bess," was built before the program was scrapped.

Did Black Bess lead Studebaker-Packard to build a series of brother and sister prototypes, seen in these images? Likely not, otherwise we'd have heard about them by now. Still, it's fun to play what-if.



Recently discovered a unique or noteworthy classic car? Let us know. Photographs, commentary, questions and answers should be submitted to *Lost & Found*, c/o *Hemmings Classic Car*, P.O. Box 196, Bennington, Vermont 05201 or emailed to dstrohl@hemmings.com. For more *Lost & Found*, visit <http://blog.hemmings.com/index.php/category/lost-and-found/>.



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to take place April 1-3 at the Broward County Convention Center. The 2015 auction generated over \$21.3 million in sales, with 76 percent of all lots sold. This clean-looking 1955 Ford Country Sedan Wagon, complete with the desirable 272-cu.in. V-8 with four-way power seat and power windows, will be one of many postwar American cars on offer. Visit www.auctionsamerica.com for a full, up-to-date lot listing and bidding information.



Palm Beach Beauties

BARRETT-JACKSON JUMPS FROM THE CACTUS

League to the Grapefruit League as it heads to West Palm Beach, Florida, for its annual South Florida Auction. Last year's event broke records with an increase in attendance, bidders and a remarkable 98 percent sell-through rate. Total sales eclipsed the \$22 million mark, and several hundred collector cars were available for sale, ranging from affordable daily drivers to special select cars that are sold specifically to benefit charities. This 1957 Lincoln Premiere sold for \$44,000 last year and was one of many desirable Fifties-era cars that were available. For a full consignment list, ticket information and the weekend's schedule, visit www.barrett-jackson.com.

AUCTION PROFILE

THE 1933 EAGLE FEATURED A NEW

V-shaped radiator, rear-slanting hood door louvers, and a newly designed rear panel. Production numbers show that 162,361 sedans were made that year, which was the second-most popular body design behind the two-door coach.

This car was a part of the Dawn and Tony Lehoski Collection, which was sold at Mecum this past December. The body-off restoration used original or NOS parts, and this was a rust-free car from West Texas. It is powered with the correct 206-cu.in. Stovebolt Six with 65hp and a manual three-speed with Freewheel option. Other features include mohair interior, rear-mounted spare tire, dual outside mirrors, Twilite headlamps, rear footrest and ashtrays, as well as front and rear chrome bumpers. With so few available for sale, it rightly sold slightly above its current value.



CAR 1933 Chevrolet CA Series Eagle Sedan
AUCTIONEER Mecum Auctions
LOCATION Austin, Texas
DATE December 12, 2015

LOT NUMBER S44.1
CONDITION #2/Restored
RESERVE None
AVERAGE SELLING PRICE \$17,000
SELLING PRICE \$22,000

APRIL Calendar

1-2 • Vicari Auctions

Tampa, Florida • 504-264-2277
www.vicariauction.com

1-3 • Auctions America

Fort Lauderdale, Florida • 877-906-2437
www.auctionsamerica.com

8-10 • Barrett-Jackson

Palm Beach, Florida • 480-421-6694
www.barrett-jackson.com

14-16 • Mecum

Houston, Texas • 262-275-5050
www.mecum.com

15-16 • The Branson Auction

Branson, Missouri • 800-335-3063
www.bransonauction.com

16 • Hooley Classic Car Auction

Goshen, Indiana • 800-860-8118
www.bartelandcompany.com

16 • Silver Auctions

Portland, Oregon • 800-255-4485
www.silverauctions.com

21-22 • Carlisle Auctions

Carlisle, Pennsylvania • 717-243-7855
www.carlisleauctions.com



Northwest Bargains

SILVER AUCTIONS' ANNUAL PORTLAND

Spring Auction at the Expo Center in Portland, Oregon, is scheduled to take place April 16. There is always an eclectic selection at Silver's auctions, and this event is expected to have around 100 cars. Classics will be on hand, both restored and unrestored, along with a variety of cars from all eras. Last year's event saw a 55 percent sell-through rate, with the top sale being a 1957 Mercury Turnpike Cruiser Indy 500 Pace Car crossing the block for \$48,000. Visit www.silverauctions.com for up-to-date consignments and bidding/selling information.



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Exquisite. Few other words can describe the level of intricate detail on this 1:43-scale Automodello model of a 1934 Packard Twelve Convertible Victoria. Hand-built, rendered in resin and painted rich maroon red, it's a wonderful replica of a Raymond Dietrich custom. Its fine brightwork extends to the spoke wheels, hood vent door pulls and radiator mascot, and the Twelve's interior features a believable wood-grain dashboard and flock carpeting. The car can even be displayed with its formal convertible roof or folded top boot. Only 299 of these standard-edition replicas are being built, along with 150 hand-numbered triple-blue Tribute Edition Packards, so you'll have to act fast.



Buick Convertibles 1949-1963

WWW.NEWALBANYBOOKS.COM • \$18.95

If you had a new soft-top Buick in your driveway in the late postwar era, you were doing quite well, and demonstrating to the world your refined automotive taste. These premium cars, built between 1949 and 1963, are the latest to receive a historical treatment by author Don Narus; this new title joins *Cadillac Convertibles 1949-1969* and *Pontiac Convertibles 1953-1967* in his General Motors Convertible series. In typical fashion, Don includes all production Buick convertible variants from those years (as well as some Motorama show models!), and shares annual model updates, basic mechanical specifications, list prices and production figures. This 150-page softcover is filled with black-and-white overall and detail images, and makes for a handy, inexpensive quick-reference guide.



Slick Topper

800-575-1932 • WWW.GENUINEHOTROD.COM • \$16.97

STP—"Scientifically Treated Petroleum"—products have been garage staples since the 1950s, and the distinctive STP logo is instantly recognizable to anyone with motor oil in his or her veins. This vintage-style, two-tone cap sports a sewn-on STP logo, and features 100-percent cotton twill construction with an adjustable hook-and-loop closure to ensure a perfect fit.

1960 Cadillac 62

800-718-1866 • WWW.DIECASTDIRECT.COM • \$139.95

This is no Mary Kay pink Cadillac! England's The Brooklin Collection has rendered the classic 1960 Series Sixty-Two Coupe in striking dusky Siena Rose Metallic, creating a 1:43-scale white-metal model that duplicates the one illustrating that year's full model line showroom brochure. This hardtop is typically heavy for its size, with accurate cast trim, excellent paint finish and an inviting interior visible through its side window openings. The grille and hubcaps aren't as detailed as the 1:1 originals, but the body proportions seem spot-on. It's not inexpensive, but Cadillac fans will be pleased.



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Not actual size.
Shown is model in Pearl White finish.
Also available in Ruby Red finish.

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Cadillac Class

Motorspot has just introduced "Fleetwood 60" Cadillac Truespoke wire wheels. Each wheel features 60 spokes in a straight lace pattern and comes with the Cadillac cap and emblem. Available in 15 x 6 inches, standard or reverse style, 13- to 18-inch sizes can be special ordered. Call to see if Motorspot's wheels will fit your model Cadillac. An optional upgrade to stainless steel is also available. Cost: \$1,995 (four wheels, caps and emblem).

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Bird Brightener

Reproduction hood grilles for the air scoop on 1955-'57 Thunderbirds are now available. For many years, it's been difficult to find replacements for Ford part number B5S-16607-A, so this grille should prove a welcome alternative to scrounging through salvage yards and swap meets. The reproduction grille is designed to fit just like the original and has a brilliant chrome finish. The studs and nuts are also included, making for easy attachment to your small 'Bird. Part number is #16607-RK. Cost: \$72.95.

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F-100 Instruments

You can now purchase a six-in-one gauge package that is designed to be a direct fit unit for the stock 1961-'66 Ford F-100 dash. The dual-layer dial design is available with standard polished stainless steel or optional satin black bezel. Installation is made simple with the included wiring pigtail, all necessary sending units, mounting hardware and push-button calibration. Lighting is provided with warm white LEDs, a built-in dimmer and a molded "light intensifier" ring to ensure bright, even light across the entire cluster. Indicator lights include left and right turn signals as well as a red halo high beam indicator hidden at the top of the tachometer. Available in OE, gray, black, white or tan. Dash housing is not included. Cost: \$975.



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Safari

History of Pontiac's stylish station wagons of the 1950s

BY THOMAS A. DeMAURO • PHOTOGRAPHY COURTESY OF GM MEDIA ARCHIVES

The Safari name is synonymous with many Pontiac station wagons from the mid-1950s through the 1980s, and some of the most stylish and sought-after models have been the upscale, two-door, 1955-'57 Star Chief Safaris.

Based on the positive reaction garnered by the 1954 Chevrolet Corvette Nomad Motorama show car, but feeling that a Corvette wagon might be too exclusive and expensive, GM determined that applying the concept to a mainstream Chevrolet and a Pontiac would attract more buyers—hence the Nomad and Safari.

"Pontiac's flair for years-ahead styling was never more evident than in the fabulous all-new Safari," boasted a 1955 ad. Though it shared the Nomad's greenhouse—which featured sporty swept-

back roof pillars, its doors and angled tailgate—the remaining body, interior, powertrain and underpinnings were Pontiac.

Pontiac Chief Designer Paul Gillan said the 1955 Pontiac design was his favorite of the run. He stated in a 1992 interview in *Collectible Automobile*, "The diagonal side molding, number two roof pillar, rear body slant and rear fender all move in the same direction and create an illusion of movement and integrated design."

The Division referred to the Safari as the "aristocrat of the sta-



tion wagons," because though it was built on the shorter-wheelbase Chieftain Series 27 chassis, its interior and exterior trim were from the upmarket Star Chief.

Despite creating stylish and well-engineered cars like the Safari and others, Pontiac was still entrenched in sixth place in sales. In July of 1956, Semon "Bunkie" Knudsen became the general manager and was tasked with increasing the division's standing. One of his first bold moves was to remove the "Silver Streaks" from the forthcoming 1957 models because he felt that they looked like suspenders. For that same model year, "Safari" was applied to all of Pontiac's station wagon offerings.

With only 9,094 Star Chief two-door Safaris built over three years—1955-'57—which was less than half of the Nomad's total production, this model's high style and low production cemented its fortune as a Pontiac collectible.

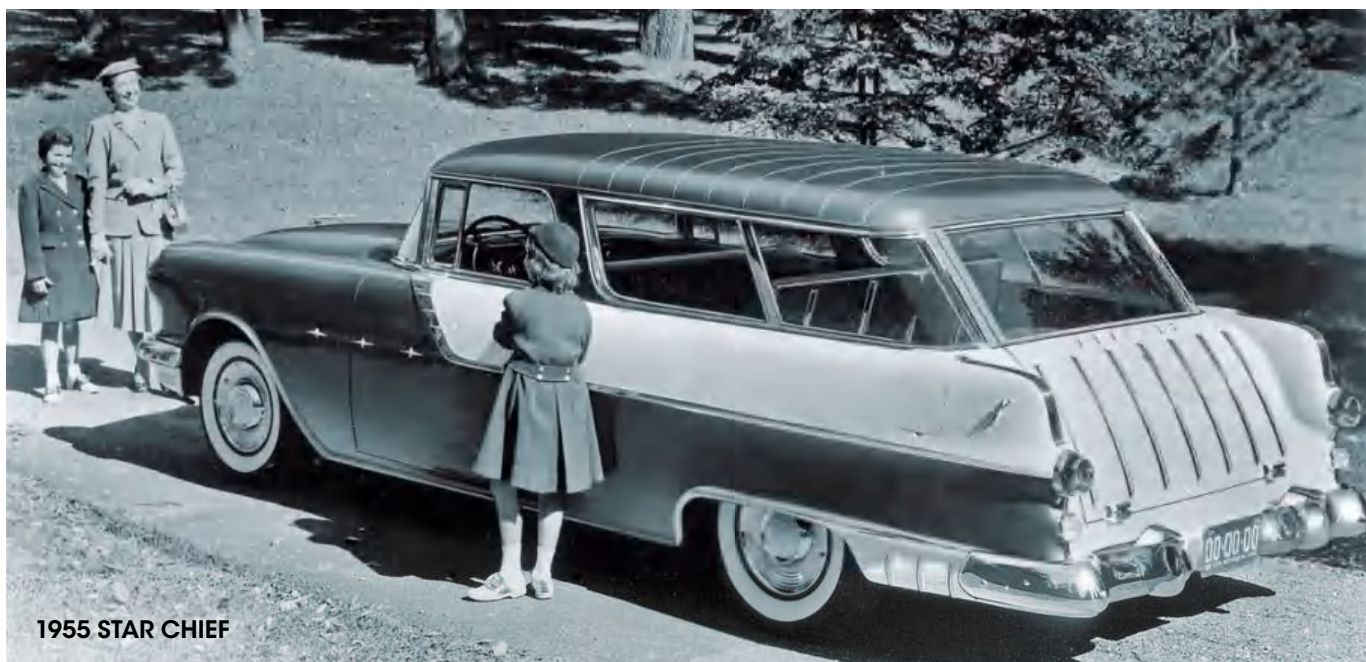
The all-new 1958 models, though appearing to be lower, longer and wider than the 1957 offerings, did not seem as low, long and wide as Chrysler's recent models. Consequently, the dramatically different 1959 Wide-Track Pontiacs, the first to be fully developed under Knudsen's leadership, helped advance the trend even more than the similar-bodied cars from sister divisions. Styling and engineering advancements led to the 1959 Pontiac being named *Motor Trend* Car of the Year.

Now, let's dig a bit deeper into what made the Safaris of the 1950s so special.

1955

The Star Chief Safari two-door station wagon was introduced on January 31, 1955, into a line that already featured the Chieftain 870 four-door and Chieftain 860 two- and four-door wagons. The 860 two-door model did not have the sporty roof pillars of the Safari, its nine-ribbed roof or its angled tailgate, and the 860's trim and equipment were more geared toward utilitarian uses.

Pontiac's design highlights for 1955 included a new body, "Twin-Streak" styling—consisting of two narrow silver streaks on the hood—redesigned front and rear bumpers, grille and hood, subtle eyebrows atop the fenders near the headlamps, drawn-back front wheel-well openings and a Panoramic windshield. Though the rear quarter panels employed some visual cues of the 1954 models, such as the subtle fins, wheel-well shape and round tail-lamps, the panels no longer bulged from the sides of the body.



1955 STAR CHIEF



1956 STAR CHIEF

1957 SAFARI MODELS



STAR CHIEF CUSTOM SAFARI—SEACREST GREEN AND LIMEFIRE GREEN

SUPER CHIEF SAFARI—
CHEVRON BLUE AND SHEFFIELD GRAY

Super Chief Safaris are upholstered in two-tone green, blue, gray or combination red and gray Morrokide.

Star Chiefs—the Safari included—featured bright side trim that gently narrowed as it angled diagonally down and rearward on the front doors and then extended horizontally across the rear quarter panels. When the “Vogue Two-Tone” (two-tone exterior colors) option was specified, the trim also split the hues. This model sported three star emblems on each side, “Safari” script on the doors, bright rear wheel-well moldings with lower quarter panel stone guards, and additional trim that wrapped around the ends of the quarter panel tops and extended to the taillamps and bright window reveals.

At 204.3 inches long, 75.4 inches wide and 59.6 inches high, the Safari featured a more than four-foot-deep cargo area with the rear seat up, which increased to 6 feet with it folded down.

The new 287.2-cu.in. Strato-Streak was Pontiac’s first overhead-valve V-8 engine. It featured a 3.75 x 3.25-inch bore and stroke, “quad gallery” engine lubrication system, reverse-flow cooling to cool around the valves first, fully machined wedge combustion chambers and a patented ball-pivot rocker arm system.

It produced 180 horsepower with a two-barrel carburetor and an 8:1 compression ratio. A four-barrel option, released in March, increased the V-8’s power to 200. A new 12-volt electrical system was also employed.

The extra-cost dual-range Hydra-Matic Drive four-speed

automatic featured gear selector choices to optimize transmission performance for normal driving and improved fuel economy or for quicker acceleration and negotiating traffic. Though Safaris we typically see have the Hydra-Matic, the three-speed synchromesh manual transmission was listed as standard for it in the 1955 Pontiac station wagon brochure.

A Hotchkiss Power Cushion Drive hypoid rear axle completed the drivetrain and housed a 3.64 rear gear standard with the manual transmission and a 3.90 optional. A set of 3.23 gears were employed with the Hydra-Matic.

The frame featured channel-section side rails, an X-member and a 122-inch wheelbase. Coil springs, control arms, vertical kingpins, shocks and an anti-roll bar were employed in the front suspension, as was a new recirculating ball steering gear. Leaf springs with “controlled friction” inserts located the rear and shocks damped them.

In front, 12 x 2.25-inch drum brakes were paired with 11 x 1.75-inch units in the rear. A set of 7.60 x 15 bias-ply tires on 15 x 5.5-inch steel wheels were standard for wagons. Fuel capacity, at 18 gallons, was 2 gallons less than the other models.

Interiors were offered in two-tone leather or leather and nylon-faced fabrics in a variety of colors. A continuous luminescent red band in the speedometer indicated the speed, and traditional pointer

gauges (except for a tach) were standard.

Safaris could be equipped with typical options like power steering, brakes, windows and more, but also some interesting ones like Venti-Heat under-seat heater and defroster, illuminated hood ornament, exhaust deflector, air conditioner, rear fender shields, chrome wire-wheel discs, Continental tire kit, windshield sunvisor and traffic light viewer, folding umbrella, portable cooler and a Remington electric shaver with 12-volt capacity for car and 110-volt for home use.

The 1955 Safari cost \$2,962 with the manual transmission and \$3,047 with Hydra-Matic; 3,760 examples were built.

1956

The Star Chief Safari two-door station wagon returned for 1956

venture!

There's no better way than in one of these beautiful, spacious Star Flight styled Safaris. At the wheel you enjoy all the handling ease, riding comfort and smooth-flowing power of America's Number 1 Road Car, plus the convenience of space for up to nine passengers or a half-ton load. Each Safari interior is designed for the utmost in style, convenience and durability. You have 19 solid and two-tone exterior color choices in the Star Chief Safari—68 in the Super Chief and Chieftain.

TWO-DOOR CHIEFTAIN SAFARI—TARTAN RED AND SHEFFIELD GRAY

THE Safari SERIES

FOUR-DOOR CHIEFTAIN SAFARI—STARLIGHT YELLOW

Chieftain Safaris are upholstered in patterned and grained vinyl-coated fabric. Two-tone color selections: gray, red or green.



with subtle styling changes and more power. Its front bumper was revised, a pair of "bomb-type" bumper guards was added and the parking lamp shapes were now round. The angled side trim on the front door was curved, and the horizontal trim to which it connected now extended more toward the front than the rear, and ended near the leading edge of the fenders.

Three red oval reflectors were set in a wide bright molding that extended to the now-hooded taillamps. With the subtle restyling, body length grew to 206.7 inches.

Engine size was increased to 316.6 cubic inches via a larger 3.94-inch bore, and the compression ratio was raised to 8.9:1. Performance was enhanced via intake and exhaust revisions, and a high-lift camshaft was installed in the new 227hp four-barrel engine. The cylinder block was also strengthened. Later in the model year, a 285hp dual four-barrel engine option was offered. The exhaust system's pipe diameter was enlarged for 1956, and an optional dual exhaust system debuted.

The new extra-cost Strato-Flight Hydra-Matic was upgraded in many areas, one of which was the addition of a Park position. A larger and more durable three-speed synchromesh transmission was introduced as well.

Shock valving was revised and fuel capacity was listed as 17 gallons for two-seat wagons like the Safari.

Leather or cloth and leather upholstery in multiple color combinations were available. The front seat was tilted rearward and moved back and down to increase headroom, legroom and occupant comfort, and the ashtray was moved to the right of the radio for easier passenger access.

The A/C and power steering systems were improved, and a six-way power seat, Deluxe Electromatic signal seeking radio, electric windshield wipers and the Autronic Eye automatic headlamp dimmer were among the new options.

Star Chief Safari production increased to 4,042 units for 1956.

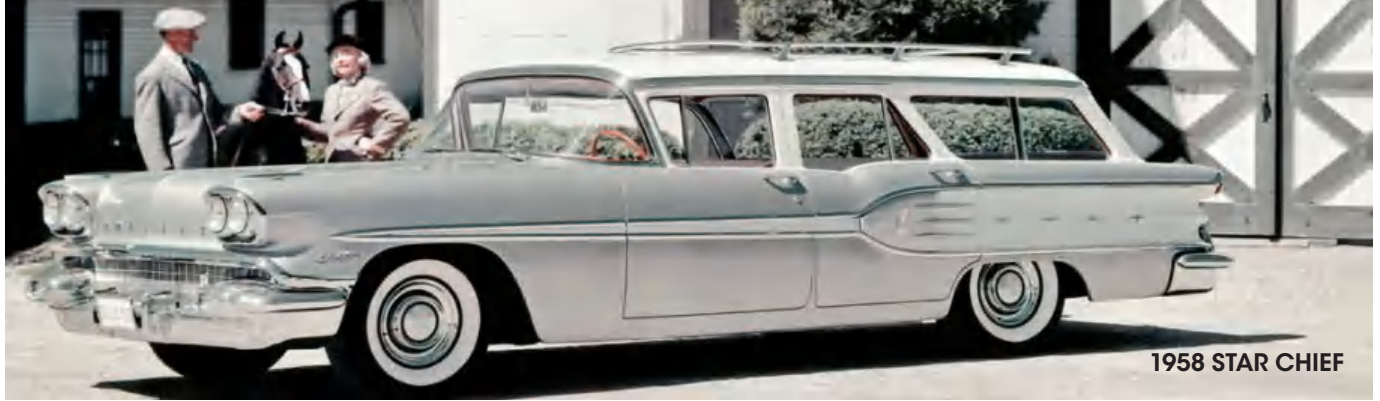
1957

All Pontiac station wagons became Safaris for the 1957 model year. The two-door Star Chief Custom Safari and the four-door Star Chief Custom Safari (Transcontinental), which was released at mid-season, were the most expensive. Next were the four-door Super Chief Safari and two- and four-door Chieftain Safari, in descending order of price and equipment.

Star Flight styling made all Pontiacs at least appear to be lower



1957 SUPER CHIEF



1958 STAR CHIEF

and wider than the previous year. And while there was a general tidying up of the front end, the body sides and rear became more dramatic. What had been thin trim on the flanks of the 1956 models now resembled a large rocket that became wide enough at the rear doors to contain the star emblems and the trim.

The wheel wells were swept back; the rear quarters jugged purposefully rearward at the top, adding more of a fin effect; backup lamps were housed above the protruding oval taillamps and ports in the new rear bumper for the exhaust mimicked their shape.

The two-door Star Chief Safari was 206.8 inches long, 75.1 inches wide and 59.3 inches high. The four-door Super Chief and Chieftain Safaris and the two-door Chieftain Safari, which did not share the sporty roof design of the Star Chief Safari, were about an inch longer and taller.

Engine size grew once again, this time via a stroke increase from 3.25 inches to 3.56 inches. The bore remained 3.94 inches, resulting in 347-cubic-inches displacement. An 8.5:1 compression ratio, 227hp two-barrel and the 244hp four-barrel engines were mated to the three-speed manual transmission. The 10:1 compression-ratio four-barrel engine produced 270hp with the Hydra-Matic and 252hp with a two-barrel carburetor. Standard and optional engine choices varied by model.

A 290hp Tri-Power option featuring three Rochester two-barrel carburetors and vacuum linkage to actuate the outer carbs was released on December 3, 1956, for all 1957 models with the Hydra-Matic.

The Strato-Flight Hydra-Matic transmission was further improved for 1957, with throttle control linkage, vane angulation, calibration and manufacturing refinements. The three-speed manual transmission was also revised, as was the clutch. A new 9.3-inch Hotchkiss hypoid rear axle housed standard rear gear ratios of 3.42 with the three-speed manual and 3.23 with the Hydra-Matic.

Suspension modifications led to new "Level-Line" ride, and 8.50 x 14 tires on 14 x 6-inch wheels became standard on Safaris.

The instrument panel was redesigned, and upholstery patterns

were updated. Chieftain and Super Chief Safaris used hardwearing Morrokide upholstery; the Custom Safari four-door featured leather; and the Custom Safari two-door employed cloth and leather or all leather. A Deluxe transistor radio and an eight-way power seat were new options for 1957.

There were 1,894 Star Chief Custom Safari Transcontinentals built; 1,292 Star Chief Custom Safari two-door models; 14,095 Super Chief Safari four-doors; 11,536 Chieftain four-doors, and 2,934 Chieftain two-door Safaris.

1958

Pontiac two-door station wagons were now discontinued in the U.S., although Canada still had the Pontiac Pathfinder two-door Safari. There were two Chieftain Safari models—six- and nine-passenger—and the top-of-the-line Star Chief Custom Safari wagon.

The body was redesigned for the third time in three years. Its front view grew larger and heavier in appearance, and quad headlamps were introduced. Larger rocket-shaped side trim outlined coves at the rear doors and quarter panels, the fins of the 1957 models were de-emphasized, side-by-side hooded quad taillamps were added and the rear roof pillars were now angled forward. The new bumper didn't feature exhaust outlets. "Circles of steel" surrounded occupants with "girder steel protection" both vertically and horizontally, said Pontiac, and the cargo area was over 9.5 feet deep with the tailgate down.

Engine size increased to 370 cubic inches, thanks to a 4.06-inch bore and 3.56-inch stroke, while top-end breathing was improved. The number in the label "Tempest 395" referred to the car's torque rating with a four-barrel carburetor.

An 8.6:1 compression ratio, two-barrel 240hp V-8 and a four-barrel 255hp engine were available only with the three-speed manual transmission. When the Super Hydra-Matic was ordered, the two-barrel, 10.0 compression, 270hp 370; or the four-barrel, 285hp engine; or the fuel-injected, 310hp engine could be specified. The new 300hp Tri-Power 370 was available with all models.

1958 STAR CHIEF





1959 CATALINA

CATALINA 9 PASS. SAFARI

The new Super Hydra-Matic transmission was refined to match the requirements of the larger engine. Rear gears were 3.23 for the Hydra-Matic and 3.42 for the manual transmission with optional 3.08 and 3.64, respectively, and the extra-cost Safe-T-Track (limited-slip) differential debuted.

"Aero-frame stability with a revolutionary backbone to replace the traditional ladder frame" allowed for a lower floor and roofline. The Quadra-Poise suspension featured new upper and lower control arm geometry to "end dive, sway and bounce," and ball joints replaced last year's kingpins. The rear suspension was revised, with trailing arms and coil springs in place of leaf springs. A rear anti-roll bar was added to the Safaris, while fuel capacity was increased to 20.5 gallons.

New optional Ever-Level air suspension contained air chambers that acted as springs, which were controlled by a "central brain," but there were durability issues.

The instrument panel was revised again, and a combination of Lustrex and Morrokide interior upholstery was employed in all Safaris. Interesting options included the "Sportable" transistor radio that slipped out of its housing to become a portable unit with its own speaker and batteries. A four-way Memo-Matic power seat remembered the driver's favorite setting, and a Safeguard speedometer allowed the driver to set a speed, so it could warn him when it was exceeded.

Star Chief Custom Safari production totaled 2,905 examples; Chieftain Safari six-passenger, 9,701 units; and Chieftain Safari nine-passenger, 5,417 units.

1959

The Chieftain name was dropped, the Catalina Safaris became the affordable wagons in six- and nine-passenger four-door models, and the top-of-the-line Bonneville was now also available as a Safari wagon.

Wide-Track was born when Bunkie Knudsen decided to move the wheels and tires out to better fill the wheel wells. The advent of the split front grille theme only accentuated the effect, as did a broad front bumper; quad headlamps placed at the outer edges of the grille instead of above it; the flatter hood; subtle side trim; low

roofline and thinner, more gracefully angled roof pillars. There was also more glass area. The twin rear fins were more restrained looking, oval taillamps were set into the edges of a like-shaped cove, and a new, more integrated bumper finished the rear.

The 122-inch wheelbase was retained for all station wagons, but length increased to 214.3 inches from 210.5, width to 80 inches from 77.4 and the height was lowered to 56.3 inches from 59.

Pontiac's tried-and-true V-8 was increased in displacement to 389 cubic inches by lengthening the stroke to 3.75 inches. It would be produced with performance and durability revisions through the 1966 model year.

Engines available with the Super Hydra-Matic transmission include the 10.0:1 compression, premium-fuel, 280hp, two-barrel 389-cu.in. V-8 and a four-barrel version rated at 300hp; there was also a no-cost economy 215hp Tempest 420E engine. A regular-fuel, 8.6 compression, two-barrel, 245hp 389 or the 260hp four-barrel version was mated to the three-speed manual transmission. The extra-cost 10.5 compression, 315hp Tri-Power V-8 was optional with both transmissions.

Standard rear gears were 3.08 for the improved Super Hydra-Matic, with 2.87:1 and 3.23:1 gear ratios optional, and 3.23:1 for the manual transmission, with 3.08:1 and 3.42:1 ratios optional.

The wheelbase was unchanged, but the chassis was redesigned with the wheels moved out about five inches, and the center of gravity was lowered. Among the suspension revisions were the use of lower-rate coil springs front and rear. New 11-inch drum brakes were fitted front and rear, but were wider at 2.5 inches, front, and at 2 inches, rear, than in past years, and the front brakes featured a cooling flange to dissipate heat more quickly. Tires remained at 8.50 x 14.

The instrument panel and the interiors were new once again, and the nine-passenger wagon now used an "observation deck" rear-facing third seat. A power tailgate window was an option that was standard in the nine-passenger wagon.

There were 4,673 Bonneville Safaris produced, as well as 14,084 Catalina Safari nine-passenger wagons and 21,162 Catalina Safari six-passenger wagons. The Pontiac Motor Division rose to fourth place in sales in 1959 and was poised to break out as a design and image leader in the 1960s. 🚗



1959 CATALINA



Safari Sensation

For the family that wanted a hardtop but needed a station wagon, the 1955 Pontiac Safari offered the best of both worlds

BY DAVE CONWILL • PHOTOGRAPHY BY RICHARD LENTINELLO

For the first 20 years after the end of World War II, luxury and sportiness went together. The ideal of the casual yet comfortable lifestyle was found in everything from vacation advertising to clothing to architecture, and particularly in the automobile. Nearly every body style was revamped between 1949 and 1957 to reflect that uniquely '50s American paradigm of sporty luxury—roadsters returned as sports cars, coupes



became hardtops, sedans spawned four-door hardtops, pickup trucks turned into coupe utilities and, perhaps most shockingly, the workaday station wagon was reworked into the sport wagon.

General Motors' Pontiac Division was heartily in need of its own reinvention by the early 1950s. The conservative, semiformal image of Pontiac's cars was mired in the division's prewar niche between basic Chevrolet and slightly more formal Oldsmobile. But Oldsmobile had undergone its own sporty rework with the introduction of the V-8-powered Rocket 88 for 1949, and Pontiac was looking increasingly stodgy and out of place.

While much has been written about the 1955 Chevrolet, the 1955 Pontiac often gets forgotten in the shuffle. Many buyers at the time found it more attractive than the cheaper Chevrolet, and in a number of respects it was a superior vehicle. Further, it was nearly as big a transformation for the Pontiac division as the 1955 Chevrolets were for Chevrolet—beginning a wholesale reinvention of the division that would continue through the debut of the Wide Track models in 1959.

All 1955 Pontiacs used the completely new A-platform shared with Chevrolet. Similar roofline and wrap-around wind-

shield aside, the Pontiac body was unique in all respects from the beltline down and included a longer front end (and correspondingly longer wheelbase) featuring a massive, divided-bumper grille. What did return were the division's trademark Silver Streaks on the hood along with matching finned trim sections





Instrument panel design is handsome and usable. Centrally mounted glovebox door is flanked by fuel/oil pressure gauge and clock; view of the former can be hindered by gearshift lever. Bright finish on top and chrome windshield trim can create glare issues.

along the top of the rear fenders.

The Pontiac Safari, like its corporate cousin the Chevrolet Nomad, had its origins with the 1954 Motorama Nomad, which was a fantasy Corvette-based two-door station wagon. While the Motorama Nomad was never intended for production, it was teased in order to whet the public's appetite for something more than the four-door family haulers that were the standard station wagon offerings up to then.

Both the Safari and the Nomad were envisioned as a marriage between the good looks of a pillarless hardtop and the utility of a station wagon. As such, both models shared their front doors with the two-door hardtop in each division. Also like the Nomad, the Safari was the most expensive body style available in its division, outpricing both the Chieftain 870 four-door station wagon and the Star Chief convertible. That pricing premium, along with a late introduction, probably explains why the Safari was also the lowest-production Pontiac for 1955, with only 3,760 examples produced.

One great advantage that the production Safari had over the Motorama Nomad and Pontiac's own 1954 Motorama Dream Car, the Bonneville, was its brand-new, 287-cu.in. V-8. Called the Strato-Streak, this new engine was originally slated to be available for the 1953 model cars, but it was delayed due to the accidental death of Pontiac General Manager Arnold Lenz. The V-8, Pontiac's first since the division used up leftover Oakland V-8s in 1932, shared nothing with the staid flathead six- and eight-cylinders that were the division's engines of choice since the early 1930s. Nor did the new V-8 share anything with any other GM division's engine,

save for the stud-mounted rocker arms that Chevrolet division was allowed to pirate for its own new V-8.

The 287-cu.in. engine was initially available only with a single two-barrel carburetor and single exhaust. With the manual transmission, buyers received solid lifters, 7.4 compression and 173 horsepower. Those who opted for Hydra-Matic drive received hydraulic lifters, 8.0:1 compression and 180 horsepower. Later in 1955, when Chevrolet debuted its own 180hp V-8, Pontiac concocted a 200-horsepower Power Pack engine that mounted a four-barrel carburetor, though still only with a single exhaust.

While a column-shifted three-speed manual was the standard transmission, 90.6 percent of 1955 Pontiac production had the Hydra-Matic automatic transmission. Hydra-Matic, available in Pontiacs since 1948, was in its last year before its substantial 1956 redesign into the Controlled Coupling Hydra-Matic. The early Hydra-Matics would later become valued by drag racers for their firm, substantial shifts, but contemporary car journalists and owners often complained about the "lurching" full-throttle upshifts of the early design transmission.

While the 1955 Pontiac received a redesigned chassis, it was built upon the same kingpin-equipped independent front suspension technology used under the 1954 cars, but with improved geometry to suit modern driving conditions. Kingpin inclination was changed from a 5-degree inward tilt to vertical, resulting in lowered steering effort—although potentially at the expense of handling. In the rear, parallel leaf springs continued to suspend an open-drive axle, as had been Pontiac convention since before



Hooded speedometer has redline indicator instead of needle; all gauges are illuminated green at night. Climate controls adjust Venti-Heat under-seat heater that works like a modern heated seat but uses a second heater core in lieu of electrical components.



The wide, leather-covered bench seat is very comfortable, and is adjustable fore and aft. Power assist was optional.

World War II. Following a practice begun in 1954, Pontiac offered two different wheelbases: 122 inches for the Chieftain line, and 124 inches for the Star Chiefs. Although the Safari was a part of the Star Chief line (it was, in fact, the only wagon offered in Star Chief trim), it used the Chieftain's shorter wheelbase and did not have the extended rear overhang found on Star Chief sedans, convertibles and Catalina hardtops.

Our Turquoise Blue and White Mist feature car was sold new in Pennsylvania and came equipped with power brakes, the Venti-Heat underseat heater and defroster, AM radio, back-up lamps, "No-Mar" fuel guard door trim, an outside rearview mirror, oil-bath air cleaner and Hydra-Matic drive. The original owner selected a harmonizing turquoise-and-white interior in leather, although nylon-and-leather was also an option. The current owner has added the much-loved illuminated hood ornament, which was still optional in 1955.

Owner Barry Zalesky, of Boynton Beach, Florida, is no stranger to sport wagons or 1955 Pontiacs. Barry's father drove a Star Chief sedan when Barry was a child, and Barry himself had a 1955 Chevrolet Nomad in college. One day, while driving his Nomad, he had his first encounter with a Safari. "A guy passed me in a black-primer '55 Safari wagon. I caught him at a light and I said, 'What did you do to that Nomad? How did you get those quarters on that wagon?' And, of course I saw they were Pontiac taillamps. And he said to me 'No, this isn't a Nomad; this is a Pontiac. This is a Safari wagon.' I said, 'What are you talking about? Pontiac never had a two-door wagon!' and he said, 'They certainly did!'"

Barry went on to tell us: "So I followed him. He didn't work very far from where I lived, so I stopped and asked him if I could look at the car. He said, 'Sure, look at the dashboard. That's a Pontiac dashboard.' And sure enough, it was. Years later, I started to enquire about Safaris. I saw them listed in *Hemmings* ... and I saw the ad for the Pontiac-Oakland Club International. I joined the Safari Chapter and that's how I started the search for my car."



Sliding windows vent the interior, which is easily warmed due to large greenhouse. Slanted B-pillars and coupe doors set sport wagon apart.



Door panels feature decorative "metal" inserts up top. Power windows were optional on Safari wagons and across the Pontiac line.

In July 1984, after a two-year search, an ad in the POCI's *Smoke Signals* magazine netted a response from Scranton, Pennsylvania, not far from Barry's then-home in Philadelphia. Barry found a one-owner car resting in a barn in very good condition, requiring only minor mechanical repairs to be functional. After attending to the negligible issues, Barry soon had the car back in service attending local car shows and cruises.

Although it hasn't required much over the years, and Barry only puts about 1,200 miles on the car annually, he has carefully



Strato-Streak 287-cu.in. engine was Pontiac's first OHV V-8. With its two-barrel carburetor, hydraulic lifters and 8.0:1 compression ratio, it developed 180hp. Dual exhausts were not available.





Roof and tailgate, including hallmark bright strips, are shared with Chevrolet Nomad. Carpeted cargo area is exclusive to Safari and helps protect luggage and deaden road noise. Backup lamps were optional. All 1955 models had Silver Streak trim.

addressed any issues. Routine maintenance has seen many fluid changes, belt and hose replacement, tune-ups and brake service at Barry's hand. He farms out bigger projects to professionals. The factory paint was replaced with a basecoat/clearcoat respray in 1994, with Barry's careful supervision resulting in a finish that reflects the lower levels of gloss found on 1950s lacquer paintwork. Before Barry left Philadelphia and retired to Florida, he had a local trim shop custom-dye turquoise-and-white hides to replace the dried-out original leather.

Since then, Barry has also had the original Bendix Treadle-Vac brake booster restored in 2014 and had the Hydra-Matic gone through by a local shop at 102,000 miles. He reports the latter effort has made the Safari shift "like a new car."

The 1950s were a transitional time in American automobiles between 1930s and '40s technology that feel antique to a modern

driver and the designs that make 1960s cars feel positively modern. The Safari fits squarely in the middle of that spectrum. If it had a manual transmission, the Safari would still sport through-the-floor brake and clutch pedals, but Hydra-Matic-equipped Pontiacs began using a pendulum-style brake pedal starting in 1954.

Potentially confusing to modern drivers is the non-standard (N-ΔDrΔ-Lo-R) gear-shift pattern on the early Hydra-Matics and lack of a "Park" position (a parking pawl is engaged with the transmission in Reverse). Barry avoids confusion by parking the Safari in Neutral and setting the "cane-handle" (i.e. T-shaped) parking brake lever found under the left side of the dashboard. Since the car must be started in neutral, this is doubly advantageous.

Younger drivers may find themselves scrambling for a minute to find a seatbelt, but they weren't offered in Pontiacs in 1955, and Barry hasn't installed them. The flat, leather-covered bench seat





is comfortable, but unlikely to hold the driver and passengers in place under spirited cornering. That said, it would be a few years before Pontiac incorporated ball joints and widened wheel tracks into its suspensions, so the interior is well suited to its original use. Barry reports that even after 500 miles, he rarely has any complaints with the interior's comfort.

Starting procedure is fairly typical: Mash the accelerator to the floor once and let up (No pumping! You'll flood it!), twist the key located low on the instrument panel to the right of the steering wheel, and the engine should come to life. Put your foot on the brake pedal, which contemporary road testers praised for width allowing left-foot braking, release the parking brake, shift into ΔDr and off you go.

The ΔDr position on the gear selector is the normal driving position, "for improved fuel economy," according to the owner's manual. The DrΔ position, on the other hand, is said to be good "for faster acceleration and driving in congested traffic." These are, of course, the dual ranges that give the Dual Range Hydra-Matic its name. Particularly performance-minded drivers discovered a gearshift tango that involved starting in ΔDr for first gear, moving the selector to Lo for an extended second-gear, and then shifting back into ΔDr at peak RPM. That would be good fun, perhaps, but not the way Hemmings treats other folks' collector cars.

Once out on the road, the Pontiac exhibits good manners, absorbing bumps readily while remaining steady. Barry says he wishes the original owner had opted for power steering, but that's

strictly because the Pontiac can be a bit of a bear to maneuver at low speeds. At anything over 5 or 10 miles per hour, you're unlikely to notice except that perhaps the unboosted steering has a bit more road feel. The 20-year-old bias-ply tires don't encourage hard maneuvering, but the car tracks straight, and it's easy to see why so many families found Pontiacs to be good for road trips.

Speaking of that, despite its sporty good looks, the Safari offers a full six feet of cargo capacity with the back seat folded down and about four feet with the back seat upright. The cargo bay itself has carpet instead of the rubberized mat offered on the Nomad. Not only does this add a little protection for your vintage cooler and rattan picnic basket or your collection of vintage luggage, but it helps to isolate the occupants from road noise a bit better.

A note about Hydra-Matics here. It's often supposed that because the Hydra-Matic is a four-speed automatic, like the more-modern TH700R4 or TH200-4R, it has a fourth-gear overdrive. That's not the case. Fourth gear is direct, so final drive is purely a function of the rear axle ratio. Normally, Star Chiefs received a 3.23:1 rear gear if they were equipped with Hydra-Matic. That's good enough for our Safari to comfortably make freeway speeds.

Watching the 1955 Pontiac's arch-shaped speedometer is almost mesmerizing. Rather than a conventional needle, it uses a red line that gets longer as speeds increase. Less pleasing is the layout of the other instruments, particularly the gasoline and oil gauges, which can be hard to see due to them being blocked by the gearshift lever. All gauges except for the clock, at least, are grouped in



Cargo area expands from four-foot depth to six feet by folding rear seat. Additional room is available if tailgate is left open. The spare tire is accessible under access panel. The tailgate can be flipped down to open while the top window remains in place.



I searched for this model for two years. I knew it was a limited-production car. It won an award for design from the Milestone Car Society. It brings back memories of growing up in the '50s and '60s. It's a typical car that many people bought to haul the family in after World War II ended. It drives very well for a 60-year-old car. On the highway, I can do 65 or 70 MPH all day long. It has a large radiator and runs cool all the time. I like the fact that when I attend car shows and cruises, I'm the only one with this model. Many people stop to admire it, ask questions and take photographs.

front of the driver and don't require much effort to view. At night, the instruments are illuminated by a soft, green light. The glovebox is centrally placed, which is a logical location so the driver can reach his insurance and registration papers if needed. The inside of the glovebox door also sports indentations for beverage containers—although don't try to use them while the car is in motion! They're strictly intended for use at the drive-in.

Safaris have a reputation for overly warm interiors due to all the glass, but visibility is excellent—especially compared with coupes and sedans just a few years older. For dazzling sun, the Safari has the same type of internal sun visors that come on modern cars. But the bright paint atop the instrument panel and the abundance of chrome trim can make for some unpleasant glare. This is nothing a pair of sunglasses and enough driving to get accustomed to it won't take care of, however.

The power brakes on the Safari work well, hauling the wagon down from speed in a seemingly adequate distance. Like all drums,

they're prone to fading under heavy or prolonged use, but drive accordingly and all will be well.

The original AM radio is still intact and was another item Barry had restored; he also replaced the antenna. The radio is completely audible when the Pontiac is under way; unfortunately, there's no Buddy Holly or Patti Page on the airwaves around Boynton Beach, so it doesn't get much use.

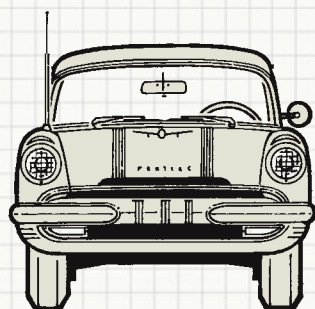
The Safari as a sport wagon was a short-lived experiment for Pontiac, and by 1957, the division had already begun to apply the nameplate to a premium-level four-door station wagon. It would continue on in that role right up through the end of Pontiac station wagons in 1989. Over the course of the 1955 to 1957 model years, only 9,094 Safari sport wagons were produced in total.

With its right-for-its-time combination of athletic looks, semi-luxury finish and suburban utility, plus standard V-8 power, the legendary Hydra-Matic transmission and fit-and-finish above its Chevrolet cousin, the Pontiac Safari is possibly the best-kept secret of the pre-muscle Pontiacs. For the collector, the Safari offers both competent road manners and classic '50s styling. It deserves to be as well remembered as the Nomad. 🐾

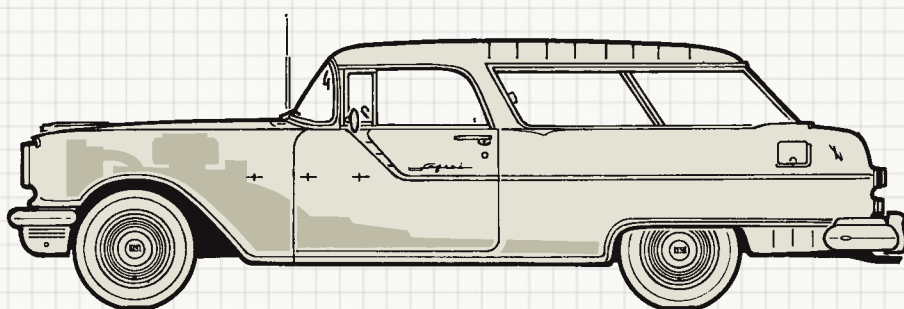


1955 PONTIAC SAFARI

ILLUSTRATIONS BY RUSSELL VON SAUERS,
THE GRAPHIC AUTOMOBILE STUDIO ©2016 HEMMINGS CLASSIC CAR



← 58.66 inches →



← 120.0 inches →

SPECIFICATIONS

PRICE

BASE PRICE	\$2,962
PRICE AS OPTIONED	\$3,467.80

ENGINE

TYPE	OHV V-8, cast-iron block and cylinder heads
DISPLACEMENT	287.2 cubic inches
BORE X STROKE	3.75 x 3.25 inches
COMPRESSION RATIO	8.0:1
HORSEPOWER @ RPM	180 @ 4,600
TORQUE @ RPM	264-lb.ft. @ 2,400
VALVETRAIN	Hydraulic valve lifters
MAIN BEARINGS	Five
FUEL SYSTEM	Rochester 2GC two-barrel carburetor
LUBRICATION SYSTEM	Full pressure
ELECTRICAL SYSTEM	12-volt, negative ground, generator
EXHAUST SYSTEM	Single exhaust and muffler

TRANSMISSION

TYPE	Column-shift four-speed automatic
RATIOS	1st 4.10:1 2nd 2.63:1 3rd 1.55:1 4th 1.00:1 Reverse 4.62:1

DIFFERENTIAL

TYPE	Hypoid drive gears, open
GEAR RATIO	3.23:1

STEERING

TYPE	Saginaw, recirculating ball
GEAR RATIO	25:1
TURNS TO LOCK	4.5
TURNING CIRCLE	42.6 feet

BRAKES

TYPE	Hydraulic, four-wheel drum, power assisted
FRONT	12 x 2.25-inch drums
REAR	11 x 1.75-inch drums

CHASSIS & BODY

CONSTRUCTION	Steel body, separate I-beam steel frame with crossmembers
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BODY STYLE	Two-door station wagon
LAYOUT	Front engine, rear-wheel drive

SUSPENSION

FRONT	Independent; unequal-length upper and lower control arms; coil springs; tubular shock absorbers; kingpin steering knuckle
REAR	Solid axle; semi-elliptical leaf springs; tubular shock absorbers

WHEELS & TIRES

WHEELS	Steel with full wheel covers
FRONT/REAR	15 x 5.5 inches
TIRES	Bias-ply wide whitewalls
FRONT/REAR	7.60-15

WEIGHTS & MEASURES

WHEELBASE	122.0 inches
OVERALL LENGTH	202.9 inches
OVERALL WIDTH	75.4 inches
OVERALL HEIGHT	62.5 inches
FRONT TRACK	58.66 inches
REAR TRACK	59.05 inches
SHIPPING WEIGHT	3,746 pounds

CAPACITIES

CRANKCASE	5-quarts (6 quarts with filter)
COOLING SYSTEM	24½ quarts with Venti-Heat underseat heater
FUEL TANK	18-gallons

CALCULATED DATA

BHP PER CU.IN.	0.627
WEIGHT PER BHP	20.81 pounds
WEIGHT PER CU.IN.	13.04 pounds

PERFORMANCE*

0-60 MPH	13.8 seconds
¼ MILE	19.7 seconds
TOP SPEED	102.0 MPH
FUEL MILEAGE	16.5 MPG (avg.)

*Motor Trend March 1955 road test of 1955 Pontiac Star Chief sedan with Hydra-Matic

PRODUCTION

TOTAL	3,760
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PROS & CONS

- + Sport wagon body style
- + Rarer than a Chevrolet Nomad
- + Styling of a hardtop with the utility of a station wagon
- Limited production
- Harder to find trim parts
- Too rare to use as a utility vehicle

WHAT TO PAY

LOW
\$15,000 – \$20,000

AVERAGE
\$40,000 – \$50,000

HIGH
\$80,000 – \$100,000

CLUB CORNER

PONTIAC-OAKLAND CLUB INTERNATIONAL
P.O. Box 68
Maple Plain, Minnesota 55359
763-479-3571, www.poci.org
Dues: \$39
Membership: 7,500

ANTIQUE AUTOMOBILE CLUB OF AMERICA
161 Museum Drive
Hershey, Pennsylvania 17033
717-566-7100, www.aaca.org
Dues: \$35
Members: 60,000

I HAVE BEEN A TRAILER CAMPER FOR many years and have always maintained subscriptions to one or more RV magazines, but never have I read a more thorough historical account of a major RV manufacturer than Pat Foster's article on Airstream Trailers in *HCC* #137.

Another piece of history I'd like to add is Airstream's role in the first manned lunar landing in 1969. Upon successful return to earth, the Apollo 11 command module was retrieved from its splashdown site in the North Pacific Ocean by the aircraft carrier *USS Hornet*. Once safely aboard, the three astronauts, Neil Armstrong, Michael Collins and Edwin "Buzz" Aldrin, were quarantined to a specially outfitted Airstream Travel Trailer. Several Airstreams were purchased for the space program to serve as quarantine units for returning Apollo astronauts.

The *Hornet* is now a floating museum berthed at the former Alameda Island Naval Station in San Francisco Bay. On board for viewing is the Airstream used for quarantine of the returning Apollo 14 crew, which included Alan Shepard, famous for his departing golf ball shot on the moon.

Steve Andrade
Gilroy, California

I ENJOYED THE DRIVEABLE DREAM feature on the 1966 Chrysler in *HCC* #136. Our uncle Joe had a 1966 300 four-door sedan in the same turquoise color, with a turquoise cloth interior. Here in Canada, for most of the Sixties, the model range for Chryslers was slightly different from that in the States. De Soto "died" here after the 1960 model year, so Chryslers were sold in both Dodge and Plymouth dealer showrooms, managing to outsell the lower-priced corporate makes in 1962. I'm sure their offbeat styling didn't help their sales results.

When the Newport series was introduced stateside in 1961, Chrysler Canada continued with the lineup as it was: Windsor, Saratoga and New Yorker, which at the time included the 300 "Letter" series. Body styles manufactured locally were the two-door hardtop models and the four-door sedan in both Windsor and Saratoga lines. New Yorkers, Letter Cars, station wagons and convertibles were imported for 1961-'62, but in 1963 Chrysler began to produce convertibles at Windsor as well, so there was a Windsor convertible, too.

In 1961-'62, the convertibles on offer were imported Newport models. The same three lines continued through 1966, although for 1964-'65, the Saratoga used the grille of the 300, and was listed in the sales brochures as the Saratoga 300. For the 1966 model year, it was called a 300 at last, but was still available in the same three Saratoga body styles, two- and four-door hardtops and the four-door sedan. The 1966 Canadian 300 used the Newport-style taillamps, and a 300-style grille, but this one year there was also on offer the Sport 300, which looked just like the American 300, though it was available to us only in two-door hardtop and convertible forms. For 1967, the model range was identical once again to the U.S. offerings, as it had been in 1960.

Wayne Janzen
New Westminster, British Columbia
Canada

I WOULD LIKE TO RESPOND TO JIM

Donnelly's column in *HCC* #137 on automotive breakthroughs that made a difference. I have been a car guy since I was about five years old and gained a lot of my practical experience in my father's junkyard. Some of my breakthroughs are influenced by Dad's opinions, and the others are mine, which come from an engineering perspective more than from style or regulatory ones. The breakthrough technology has been influenced by the infrastructure of the day and will continue to be so.

My list of five breakthroughs that made a difference are: the Interstate Highway System, electric starters, roll-up windows, hydraulic brakes and micro-processor engine control.

I believe there is more yet to come. Material technology such as carbon fiber panels will change our cars much like the high-strength steel mentioned in Jim's column. Self-driving cars are waiting in the wings, and will certainly be a breakthrough technology that will improve transportation safety possibly more than anything so far.

Dennis Ulery
Ballston Spa, New York

ENJOYED THE ARTICLE IN *HCC* #137

about camping and travel trailers. Even though we don't own an Airstream, we do have a Forest River Fifth Wheel. Also, Jim Richardson's column, "The

Big Sleep," was very humorous and hit home.

In 1972, I bought a 1947 "station-wagon" tent. It was 10 x 10 x 8 feet, and when set up, there was a flap on the back that attached to the luggage rack of a station wagon, allowing you to go from the tent to the station wagon without going outside. We still have it and occasionally use it. We just don't have a station wagon, yet.

To get off the ground, we have a 1966 Mallard Canvas Back pop-up trailer that we pull with our all-original 1967 Mercury Cougar. When the camper is set up, it looks like a Conestoga wagon. When we use it, there is very little privacy, as everyone wants to look at the camper. To get even further off the ground, we use our Forest River Fifth Wheel.

Jim also mentioned there should be a "museum showing the evolution of camping trailers." There is such a place in Elkhart, Indiana, and in Auburn, California, at the Auburn County Museum, there is a Studebaker Conestoga wagon set up like a modern-day camper. It has a fold-down bed and a wood-burning stove for heat and cooking. Studebaker invented this, among other things.

Paul Hayes
Lawrence, Indiana

AS USUAL, JIM RICHARDSON'S

column in *HCC* #137 hit home. This time revitalizing memories of sleeping in cars and the circumstances surrounding each event, especially the people, the vehicle and where it took place. For me, it started as a kid when accompanying my father on errands. If the place Dad had to visit was of no interest to me, I just reclined the front seat of his 1951 Nash and took a snooze.

As a young adult on my first solo cross-country road trip, the front seat of my 1954 Buick (see *Reminiscing*, issue #131), while not the most comfortable, was where I spent several nights. Back in the Sixties, while dating the prettiest girl in art school and somehow convincing her to travel the country with me, a 1954 Chrysler New Yorker proved accommodating for the two of us and a puppy. With a mattress in the back and luggage on the roof,

Continued on page 34

The Met Mistake

George Romney didn't make many mistakes in his life, but I know one time he really screwed up. That was when the renowned American Motors CEO decided to discontinue the once-popular Metropolitan in favor of the Rambler American. It was a really bad decision; maybe not the worst he ever made, but right up there in the top three.

You remember the Metropolitan. It was a small British-built car introduced in 1954 by the Nash Motors Division of Nash-Kelvinator



Corporation. Some people like to call it America's first sub-compact car, but they're forgetting both Crosley and American Bantam. The Metropolitan really might be considered one of America's first "captive imports," i.e., an import car brought in by an American automaker (Nash-Healey being the first).

The Big Three automakers horselaughed at the idea for a couple of years before they began frantically importing their own overseas models to try to meet the tide of demand for small cars. Remember the Ford Anglia, Vauxhall Victor and Opel Kadett? But Nash was first, as Nash usually was.

There were good business reasons for bringing the Met to America. Being built overseas, the supply of Metropolitans wouldn't be affected by the kind of steel shortages that held back Nash production from 1945 to 1950. I've always felt that Nash CEO George Mason initiated the Met project so that his dealers would have an additional line of cars to sell even if the steel shortages returned. In addition, the Met put Nash into a market segment it otherwise would not have been able to enter. And of course, it gave Nash a solid entry in overseas markets.

Designed by independent stylist Bill Flajole, under contract with Nash, the Metropolitan was a two-seat "personal car," meaning it wasn't meant to be a family car. The Met was aimed at singles and at those looking for a second car in a two-car family. Sure, technically it had a back seat, but only small children could squeeze into it. I tried it once when I was younger and much more flexible, and I couldn't manage to fit my then-svelte body back there no matter how hard I tried.

Nash hired Britain's Austin Motor Company to build the Metropolitan for them on a

contract basis. The Metropolitan was introduced to Americans on March 19, 1954, with the expectation of dealers ordering perhaps as many as 6,000 cars in the first year. When wholesale shipments totaled nearly 14,000 units, the company was pleasantly surprised. Even better was the response by the press—they universally

loved the new little car. For a relatively minor investment, Nash had a popular car on hand that fit perfectly with its strategy of entering new market segments in the lower price ranges. The Met,

at just \$1,445 for the coupe and \$1,469 for the convertible, anchored the bottom of the Nash price structure.

But Nash contracted for too few cars, so the company couldn't keep up with demand during 1954-'56. Finally, in 1957, the supply grew and sales did, too. In addition to the U.S., Nash also distributed the car in Canada and in Europe. Wholesale shipments to North America peaked at over 22,000 units in 1959 and then began to decline. There were two reasons for this:

1. After 1959, AMC stubbornly refused to update the car, even to the point of retaining its passé two-tone color scheme and enclosed wheels into 1962, by which point it looked comically out-of-date.

2. George Romney decided that the smallest car AMC would offer would be the Rambler American. Why? For greater profits, pure and simple. As a manufacturer, AMC made a lot more money selling cars built in its own factories rather than those it had contracted for. This isn't conjecture; AMC V.P. Roy Chapin Jr. told me so himself. From that viewpoint, Romney's move made sense; if you're going to sell cars, it's better to sell the ones you make the most profit on, right?

But the Met and the American were distinctly different cars, and they appealed to different customers. Metropolitans appealed to people who like imported cars. By dropping the Met, Romney walked away from that large-and-growing market. Dumb.

AMC designers were working on a new, roomier Met when the word came down that the company would no longer import it. That's too bad, because imports enjoyed big market increases in the 1960s. Just look at how well VW and Toyota did. ☹



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The Metropolitan

really might be

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automaker.

//

it was quite the adventure. A few years later, that same girl (today my wife of 50 years) and our first child went camping at the rim of the Grand Canyon. This was May and the temperature dropped to the low 30s that night; too cold for outdoor sleeping. Our new 1969 Toyota Corolla, though cramped, gave us shelter for the night. That experience inspired the family to get a little more sophisticated when the call of the road beckoned. No doubt the 1965 VW camper was the most civilized sleep-in vehicle we ever acquired. Painfully slow for highway travel, notoriously unreliable, but lovely to look at and fun to drive, that converted microbus crisscrossed the country with us many times. And, it afforded a great night sleep on the streets of 1970s Manhattan. Somehow, today I find myself eyeing the ultimate motor homes and fantasizing a bit. Just maybe?

Anthony Monaco
Dunedin, Florida

EXCELLENT ARTICLE IN HCC #137

about the 1979 AMC Pacer. Being from a long-time AMC family, starting with the Ramblers and AMC cars purchased by my dad, when it came time for me to buy a new car in 1976, I felt the Pacer was a no-brainer. It did not have nearly the options that your feature car has, but it drove and rode as well as any larger car, which was one of its great selling points. The red paint color and custom wheels were a great look for a really cool car, at least in my eyes. The six-cylinder engine had plenty of power and provided decent mileage, although its weight worked a little against it when it came to mileage. And it had a very roomy interior for a compact car. The only major problem my wife and I had with it was that the starter had to be replaced. And this seemed to have been a trend with AMC and the Pacer.

Thanks for bringing back a lot of great memories of a car that would be nice to have again.

Ted Ericson
Lincoln, Nebraska

MILTON STERN'S DETROIT

Underdogs in HCC #137 was enjoyable to read. Naturally, we all have our special old cars, often those we identified with when we were young, as Stern says in his beautiful, nostalgic piece.

I think those mid-'60s big Mercurys

never had the recognition he would have liked mainly due to one thing. Unlike top-of-the-line Oldsmobiles and Buicks, the Park Lane in the later '60s had the same look because of its roofline, giving it the same character as the lesser models such as the Monterey. The car simply looked like a stretched Ford in both sedan and hardtop four-door models. Conversely, the GM mid-line models, Olds and Buick, utilized the larger C-body, which set them apart from the B-body cars of Chevrolet and Pontiac as well as from their own 88 and Le Sabre models. The exception would be the Pontiac Bonneville. The big Pontiac, though having the same body design as the Catalina, had an appeal for the younger crowd along with a tremendous marketing campaign, the genesis of which was the Wide-Track marketing.

Mercury never followed through at all; it simply produced an excellent product without sex appeal or marketing support, essentially, a large Ford. I had a 1968 Park Lane, and it was a wonderful ride and a strong car.

Joshua Weiss
Hewlett Harbor, New York

TO A LONGTIME MERCURY FAN,

Milton Stern's column on Mercurys was wonderful. I currently own a mostly original 1968 Monterey convertible and an original 1977 Marquis Brougham. These cars drive, ride and provide comfort that is hard to beat. They require little maintenance and are reliable. You go to a car show, and yours may be the only Mercury there. I, too, don't understand why more people don't show up in Mercurys.

Louis Manus
Rapid City, South Dakota

I LOVED THE ARTICLE ON THE 1962

Mercury Comet in HCC #136. When I was 17, I picked up a 1962 Comet that had been abandoned with a blown engine on I-95 in Connecticut. As was often the custom back then, when the engine blew the owner simply pulled the plates off the car and left it by the side of the road. My boss picked it up with his tow truck and brought it to his service station. Other than the engine, the car was in new condition, so we swapped in a 200-cu.in. straight-six from a wrecked Mustang. Since I was young and full of ideas, I decided to also swap in a bucket seat interior from a wrecked Falcon Sprint—it went in with no problems, even

though the Comet was a four-door sedan. A repaint in screaming yellow was followed by lacework racing stripes—one down the center of the hood, two down the trunk lid. My buddies called it *The Leaping Lemon*, and it was one of the best cars I've ever owned—wish I could find it now.

Pat Foster
Milford, Connecticut

I WAS HAPPY TO SEE THE OLDS-

mobile Cutlass Ciera getting some respect, although I was disappointed (notice I didn't say "surprised") to see it in the Detroit Underdog section of issue #133. Mr. Stern said he "was determined to find someone who owns and enjoys a Ciera." Although mine isn't quite old enough to qualify as a classic (it's a 1992 model, S-trim-level four-door sedan with the 3300 Buick V-6 and 4T60 four-speed automatic), I do enjoy it.

I bought it at a towing auction about 18 months ago for \$675. I drive it almost every day, and although it has a few minor issues, it has aged more gracefully than any other car I've owned. It's reliable and surprisingly pleasant transportation. I hope to keep it on the road with routine maintenance until it's old enough to be a classic.

GM kept making the Ciera and the nearly identical Buick Century for a long time for the right reasons. These were good cars that only got better each year (except maybe in '94 when the torquey and bulletproof 3300 Buick V-6 was replaced by the 3.1L 60-degree V-6).

Thanks for giving the Cutlass Ciera some praise, however faint.

Brian Nickel
Bothell, Washington

RICHARD'S COLUMN IN HCC #133

struck a nerve, particularly with regard to his parents' 1958 Super 88 sedan. My parents had a 1955 88, a '56 Super 88 and a (to me, ghastly) '58 in "Mountain Haze"—or just plain purple, to the uninitiated.

My mom was office manager of an Olds dealer, so we had a new car every year, except 1959. We obviously disagree about the looks of the '58 models, but at least ours was an Olds; if it had been a '58 Buick, I'd have been too embarrassed to show up in it at school.

As for my nomination of a "four-door prettier than its two-door counterpart": the 1961 Electra, particularly its pillarless version. Very elegant.

Gary Tubesing
Anacortes, Washington

Sit On This Awhile

Every so often, my parents would talk to me—lecture me, really—about how tough and deprived they were growing up. I'm not begrudging them, or anyone else who shared their experience: They were kids of the Depression. My maternal grandfather shod mules in a Western Pennsylvania coal mine, and my paternal grandfather lost what had at one point been a profitable trucking outfit that served Brooklyn grocers.

Then, of course, came the war. I can still easily recall my mother talking about how it was next to impossible then for ladies to find stockings, or as they were commonly called at the time, "nylons," since that DuPont synthetic was restricted as a strategic material. Instead, women lined up to buy "leg makeup," which was a little less scarce.

You can't blame America, then, for going nuts after World War II and racing off on an odyssey in search of comfort and convenience that's enveloped three whole generations by now. The décor of our living spaces today can serve as a glimpse into that unending quest for luxury, or anything that somewhat looked and acted like it. Cherry-stained plywood paneling, faux marble Formica and even clip-on neckties that you didn't have to knot, which drew teasers trying to tear them off your collar like a magnet if you were forced to wear them as a kid. The fake plastic plants that kept department stores like Two Guys and E.J. Korvette's in business for decades fall into this category of low-rent luxury, too.

From this point, the whole cycle reached its logical conclusion around 1970, when we discovered velour. If you bought an American car from that point forward, and in particular one that aspired toward luxury itself, you were sitting on velour. Swaddled it in, really.

The Kashmiris were probably the first people to produce velvet, using specialized looms that created a tufted silk. Velvet was a staple of Central Asian trade along the Silk Routes when East and West first intersected in Constantinople. Once in Europe, velvet became the fabric that emperors demanded when it came to cushioning their divinely entitled undersides; the fabric sometimes imbedded with gold filigree, and always brightly dyed in regal, expensive shades of maroon and violet. Thanks in large part to Marco Polo, who brought it West, velvet in Europe was first associated with Venice, before the early Belgians and French got into it, too. If you see a priceless piece of furniture from this epoch in a museum or at an exclusive antiques purveyor, it will almost surely be upholstered in velvet.

It was the French who figured out how to make velvet cheaper, by weaving it on a loom from pure cotton and giving it tiny piles of uneven depth. Perfecting the process around 1844 in Lyon, they

called the new fabric velour. The explosive growth of cotton processing in the United States during the 19th century brought velour into enormously broad usage worldwide. Velour was cheap and pretty durable. You could find it inside jewelry cases, as the covering on plush toys, cushioning delicate instruments and in everyday wardrobes.

Synthetics transformed the textiles industry, both in the United States and globally. The first big change to velour came when it was co-woven with rayon, a nitrocellulose that was first promoted, as it happened, as a cheap substitute for silk. It held coloring, but didn't stretch well. A solution came in the substitution of polyester fibers as components of the velour weave. It still felt soft and delightful like velvet, but could be pulled with almost any force and not rip.

That's when velour became a household regular, used for drapes and those sofas that swallowed you whole. Car interiors came almost immediately. Whether you bought a new Lincoln Mark IV, or were part of the much bigger audience that downshopped for an Oldsmobile Cutlass Salon or a Dodge Royal Monaco Brougham, you, too, could park your tush on crushed pleasure. Velour was more of a social equalizer than the cars it upholstered. Everybody could ride classy. Or brag that they did, anyhow.

Whether most people are willing to acknowledge it or not, the widespread use of velour in car interiors is, in hindsight, a watershed moment. Sure, fuzzy cloth in blinding red, dotted with button tufts like a cheap throw pillow, is tasteless to millions. But next time you see a Seventies car, look carefully. It may have those other banalities of the period like C-pillar glass, "coach" lamps or a halo vinyl roof. It's probably also rusted up to its beltline. But look inside. The deep velour may be discolored by a million spilled Big Gulps or Frostys, but it's most likely intact and otherwise free of blemishes, unless someone accidentally dropped smoking materials on it. The fabric is the only thing in the car that didn't disintegrate over time.

Velour eventually ran its course as a fad, starting after Ricardo Montalban made leather upholstery fashionable on pseudo-prestige cars before getting the *Fantasy Island* call. Dead cow skin now adorns everything upstream of a Kia Rio. Go to the mall, and it's apparent that people care more about what's imprinted on their apparel today than what it's made from. That's their problem. Not all that far in the past, your American car said more about what you wore than whatever was in your closet. ☞

Editor's Note: Jim Donnelly is on vacation, so we dipped into the archives and selected one of our favorites, from HCC #41.



“
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Tale of a Franklin Test Driver

One of my great pleasures in doing research on automotive history has been the opportunity to talk to people who had been active in the auto industry prior to World War II. In the 1970s to early 1980s, a fair number of the men and women who made their living working for car manufacturers, both large and small, were still alive to share their stories.

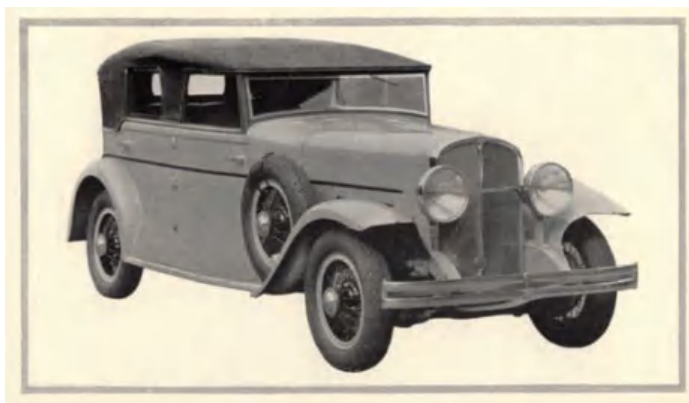
I was fortunate enough to have the opportunity to have contact and conversations in person and by mail with numerous

gentlemen who were employed by the H.H. Franklin Manufacturing Company, which built the Franklin car in Syracuse, New York, from 1902 thru 1934. One of the fellows I got to know reasonably well was James “Red” De Garmo, who started to work at Franklin in 1926 as a mechanic in the engineering department, but shortly after that, he told me, “I began ‘mileage driving’ experimental cars.”

Jim De Garmo told me he enjoyed being a mileage/test driver, and there were six other fellows who had the same job, spread over different shifts. He related, “In ‘mileage driving,’ the cars were driven night and day. For instance, someone would take over my car after I left work. During each eight-hour shift, the average mileage was 240 miles. Periodically, the cars were dismantled to check for wear.” He also said he worked as personal chauffeur to the Franklin Company president, Herbert Franklin. Every summer, Mr. Franklin would request that a personal chauffeur be assigned from the experimental department to drive for him, in addition to the permanently employed family chauffeur. During that time, cars of various body styles were used. Mr. Franklin invariably sat in the back, except on the rare occasions he would take the wheel himself.

Jim reported to Mr. Franklin’s home on James Street mornings at 8:00 a.m., and left at 5:00 p.m. each day. He told me Herbert Franklin was an impeccable dresser and that he did enjoy a fine cigar. Often, while driving Mr. Franklin from his home to the Franklin Company office, Mr.

Franklin would request the car be stopped and he would walk the remaining mile to the plant. Many trips were made to New York City via Route 20 east to Route 9, and then south on that route down to Manhattan. Jim wrote me, “Whenever a car passed our Franklin on the road, H.H. would ask, ‘What make of car was that?’”



blocks away from the Plaza Hotel at the west side of Columbus Circle, where Mr. Franklin’s car would be serviced, washed, cleaned and polished before they returned to Syracuse.

One of the cars that they used was an early version of the Franklin “Pirate” phaeton that was designed by Raymond Dietrich and that featured doors that flared out over the running boards. The car Jim drove Herbert Franklin around in had 1929-style external-lug wire wheels, flared front fender tips and a belt-line molding that ran the length of the middle of the body. The car was unusual enough to be written about and pictured in the February 1930 issue of *Country Life* magazine. This special Franklin was painted battleship gray with vermilion-red trim and wheels.

Jim told me he didn’t mind the experience as chauffeur for the head of the Franklin Company, but much preferred his normal work as test driver. The one thing he did not like was the fact he had to wear a chauffeur’s uniform, complete with chaps, tie, hat at a certain angle, and gloves. It was hot summer weather when he was chauffeur, and that wool suit was really uncomfortable to wear. There wasn’t much room in the front compartment of the Pirate five-passenger phaeton, and the seat wasn’t adjustable; Jim was not a small man.

Mr. Franklin picked up on Jim’s discomfort and when asked how Jim’s performance on the job was by John Burns, who was the head engineer of the experimental department and Jim’s boss, Mr. Franklin stated, “Jim isn’t much of a *chauffeur*, but he is one helluva *driver*.”

It took about seven hours to get from Syracuse to New York City in those days, and Mr. Franklin would stay at the Plaza Hotel, and Jim would stay at the Empire Hotel. There was a Franklin dealer a few



One of my great pleasures in doing research on automotive history has been the opportunity to talk to people who had been active in the auto industry prior to WWII.

Touring Treasure

With its uniquely shaped grille, the 1938 Plymouth P-6 Two-Door Touring Sedan was one of the most distinctive-looking cars of its era

BY TERRY SHEA • PHOTOGRAPHY BY RICHARD LENTINELLO



For the 1938 model year, Plymouth returned with its 1937 models largely unchanged, save for a more pronounced, almost bulbous grille. Coupled with the economy turning back toward recession, this polarizing feature did the company

no favors, as Plymouth sales, for the first time ever, backpedaled and dropped more than 40 percent. Midway through the model year, designers moved the headlamps lower and closer to the cowl at the behest of dealers asking for change. But the headlamps remained attached to the side of the grille structure and not the

fenders, as was the case on Chrysler, Dodge and De Soto models.

Chrysler Corporation categorized Plymouth's model into two ranges for 1938, making the cars available in the P-5 Business line or the P-6 Deluxe versions. The P-5 (which was renamed Roadking midway through the model year as a way of better distinguishing





Plymouth's P-6 Deluxe models were distinguished from the basic P-5 Business/Roadking line with the inclusion of opening quarter-vent windows and a simulated woodgrain color pattern on the dashboard and other interior trim.



the line) lacked the wood-grain look of the P-6's interior, along with opening vent windows at the front doors.

Whether in P-5 guise or the stepped-up P-6 style, behind that distinctively shaped grille sat Plymouth's venerable 201-cu. in., L-head, straight-six engine. With a 6.7:1 compression ratio, it produced 82 horsepower at 3,600 RPM and 145-lb.ft. of torque at just 1,200 RPM. Though Plymouth announced a slightly higher compression version that was said to be good for four more horsepower, it seems that none were ever produced in 1938. With four main bearings, aluminum pistons and full-pressure lubrication, the Plymouth engine represented solid engineering. Plymouth also touted the relative smoothness of its driveline, based not only on the powerplant itself, but also on the rubber engine mounts Plymouth dubbed "Floating Power." Regardless of designation, a three-speed manual transmission was standard on all models, with overdrive optional, and fed power to a rear axle with a 4.1:1 overall ratio.

Plymouth had pioneered a high-quality, well-engineered automobile for the low-price market, debuting with four-wheel hydraulic brakes when that sort of technology had only been adopted by a small handful of companies. Likewise, the 1938 Plymouths had an all-steel body and a suspension—including an anti-roll bar and a steering setup with a relatively fast ratio and a small, rubberized steering "shock eliminator" attached to the front left spring mount—that outclassed other low-price offerings. Hydraulic shocks and a flat floorpan that eliminated the driveshaft tunnel in the rear of the car also contributed to a level of passenger comfort that set the Plymouth apart from other cars in its class. Soundproofing material throughout also added to the passenger isolation.

From the beginning, Chrysler's focus on engineering exhibited

itself with aplomb on each new Plymouth, and, 10 years in, the 1938 models continued that tradition. For the P-6 Series, buyers could choose from nine different models, starting with a two-door business coupe, a rumble-seat coupe, the two-door Touring Sedan shown here, a two-door convertible and a variety of four-door sedans. All rode on a 112-inch wheelbase, save for the larger seven-passenger models, which took advantage of an expansive 132 inches between the axles to accommodate all passengers.

The Touring Sedan featured a trunk built in as part of the body, which made it Plymouth's most popular body style for several years. In two-door form, 46,669 examples were built during the 1938 model year, second to the more popular four-door Touring Sedan, of which 119,669 were built. With seating for five-passengers, the P-6 Deluxe version sold for a Depression-era friendly \$785, an \$84 premium over the P-5 Roadking two-door Touring Sedan. Curiously, despite the tough economy in 1938, more than 73 percent of Plymouth buyers opted for the more premium Deluxe version, including the Kentucky farmer who was the original owner of this car.

It's hard to believe that a 78-year-old car can have had just three owners, but Tom Sammon is proud to call himself just the third keeper of the keys to this passionately restored two-door 1938 Plymouth P-6 Touring Sedan.

Tom, a building contractor from Grant-Valkaria, Florida, has owned the beautiful Mopar for just seven years and rightly credits its restoration to the woman he bought it from, Alice Brutscher, and her late husband, John.

John, then living in Louisville, bought this Plymouth for Alice as an anniversary gift in 1967. Alice loved the Plymouth, using it to go to work and haul the kids around. By the late Sixties and early Seventies, the preserved Plymouth surely had to be a sight on Louisville roads as



“They pulled the blankets off that were covering the car in the garage, and I fell in love with it immediately.”



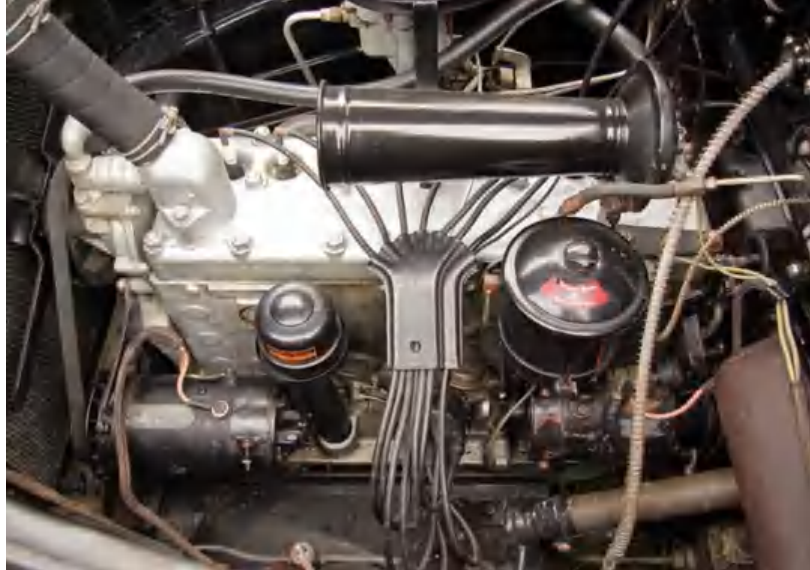
a daily driver.

This Plymouth had plied the highways and byways of Kentucky for decades previous. The original owner, a farmer from Breckenridge County, made the short trek to Chrysler Corporation's assembly plant just across the Ohio River in Evansville, Indiana, to pick up his two-door Touring Sedan, which he would keep for 29 years, surely proud to call what was advertised as "America's Smartest Low-Price Car" his own. He drove it until 1955, and then on the farm after that until John bought it for his wife.

While Alice and John used the old Plymouth for a while, it was eventually taken off the road, with the couple planning on restoring it in retirement. When they moved to Florida, they built a garage dedicated to the car, hauled it down from where it had been stored in Kentucky and began restoring it in the Nineties as a team effort.

Tom told us that Alice was a retired schoolteacher, so she did all of the research. And John was a retired machinist, so you know how meticulous a machinist can be. So, it was a husband-and-wife team—not just John alone—that restored the car. Alice spoke fondly of filing the markings off of stainless steel bolts so that they looked original.

The pair joined the Cape Canaveral chapter of the AACA, enlisting their support and that of the Plymouth and Mopar communities to get the car done right as they embarked on a body-off restoration in their little two-car garage. And their efforts paid off handsomely. After roughly a year of what Tom refers to as a "full-time" endeavor, Alice and John entered the car at an AACA meet in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, in 1998 and came away with their First Junior award, followed up soon after by National Senior prize at Oak Ridge, Tennessee.



The 201-cu.in., L-head straight-six in all 1938 Plymouths produced a very respectable 82 horsepower while delivering reasonable fuel economy.

After John passed away in 2006, the Plymouth sat for two years in the garage before Alice decided to sell it. When Tom heard about the car, he went to take a look at it—he was not disappointed. "They pulled the blankets off that were covering the car in the garage, and I fell in love with it immediately," Tom says. He describes the negotiation process with Alice as "more of an interview to see that I was worthy of ownership." But he passed muster with Alice and was able to buy the car, albeit

with one caveat: She was to show the car one final time. At the 2008 AACA Winter Meet in Melbourne, Florida, Alice received the car's ninth Preservation Award, a testament to the quality of the restoration and the ensuing care the couple lavished on the Plymouth.

Tom, who drives it about 500 miles every year, has since taken to showing the car. One of the highlights came at the annual Mopars with Big Daddy at the Don Garlits Museum of Drag Racing in Ocala, where, in a field of over 250 Mopars—the vast majority from the muscle car era—Tom's 1938 Plymouth caught Big Daddy's eye and earned him the Don Garlits Pick for the show.

Fortunately for Tom, John and Alice's restoration work has held up extremely well, with Tom only needing to replace a starter and have the transmission rebuilt because a synchro was going bad. Tom admits, "I just wash and wax it and change the oil occasionally. That's pretty much all I do to it." What better testament to 41 years of ownership and the skill and determination to make the Plymouth like new again.

Tom's plans are about as straightforward as they can get: "I figure the first owner had it 29 years, and the second owner 41 years. Unfortunately, I don't think I will ever break either of those records, but I'm going to hang onto it as long as I possibly can. It's costing me very little to just keep it in the garage and drive it when I want to." 🐾





Hilton Head Concours

South Carolina's Motoring Festival of Distinction

WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY RICHARD LENTINELLO

There are few better venues to host a concours than amidst the shade of the towering live oak trees that lend Hilton Head Island its characteristic personality. The warm autumn air, nearby ocean breeze, and an extensive array of interesting and unique collector cars of all nationalities make the Hilton Head Concours a must-attend event.

Since its early days at the Coastal Discovery Museum, the Hilton Head Concours has evolved into a significant player in the crowded concours field. Now that it has moved to the more scenic and spacious grounds of the Port Royal Golf Club, its future is brighter than it's ever been. Plus, its early November schedule and its location halfway between two of America's great historic Southern cities—Savannah and Charleston—make it an ideal vacation spot that the whole family will enjoy. Oh, and let's not forget about the exciting vintage car races that are held across the river from

Savannah the week prior to the concours.

The full name of this noteworthy event is the Hilton Head Island Motoring Festival & Concours d'Elegance, and a motoring festival it is. On Saturday, there's a Car Club Showcase, whereby members display all sorts of collector cars, from classics to muscle cars, European sports cars and exotics, along with numerous American beauties from the '50s and '60s. Sunday is concours day.

For more details about this year's event, to be held November 5-6, visit its website at www.hhiconcours.com.



The Mercedes-Benz, Dual-Ghia and Chrysler Imperial shown above were the three finalists competing for Best of Show honors. Another rarely seen beauty was this cream-colored 1934 Pontiac Cabriolet owned by Brian and Trish White from Apex, North Carolina. Brian's father bought it at Hershey in 1985.



Richard and Mary Poppo from Bakersville, North Carolina, showed their 1954 Sportsman Red Corvette, which they bought 45 years ago.



The rarest of all Model A Fords is the A400 Convertible Sedan, such as this restored 1931 beauty owned by Robert and Mitzi McNab of Johnson City, Tennessee.



Asheville, North Carolina, resident W.L. Boyd brought his right-hand-drive 1929 Chevrolet AC Phaeton.



One of the rarest Lincolns ever built was this 1926 L Type 130 boattail speedster; it's owned by Robert Jepson Jr. of Savannah.



Dale Critz, Jr., also from nearby Savannah, Georgia, showed his authentically restored 1911 E-M-F, a Model 30 factory racer.



Built for Dale Berger of Berger Chevrolet, this 1-of-128 1967 Impala SS427 convertible is owned by Douglas van Kalker of Asheville.



This 1956 Chrysler New Yorker sports a Hi-Way record player; Doug and Chris Dressler from Ocean Isle Beach, North Carolina, own it.



Destroyed during Hurricane Floyd, this 1966 Corvair has been restored by its proud owner Jim Elliott from Yorktown, Virginia.



Randy Still from Kingsport, Tennessee, displayed his 1952 Cadillac Fleetwood 60 Special alongside the 1959 Series 62 convertible owned by locals Jim and Clare Mackie.



Asheville residents Roy and Linda Crowninshield brought down their 1966 Shelby G.T. 350H, which sat alongside the unrestored 1965 G.T. 350 owned by Leland Cross of Centreville, Delaware.



Driven just 14,000 miles, this unrestored 1962 Olds Starfire was shown by Jim Heustess of Jupiter, Florida.



Restored by its owner, Bill Alley from Greensboro, Vermont, this is a very rare 1909 Packard Roadster.



Suffolk, Virginia, residents John and Lynn Heimerl showed their striking 1935 Chrysler Airflow Imperial.



You rarely see a 1947 Plymouth Special Deluxe station wagon in such outstanding condition as this one, owned by Henri David of Old Saybrook, Connecticut.



Best of Show was awarded to this gorgeous 1933 Chrysler Custom Imperial Phaeton owned by Joseph and Margie Cassini from West Orange, New Jersey.



Smooth Style

Chrysler's sporty, luxurious 1970 Three Hundred convertible represented the end of an era

BY MARK J. McCOURT • PHOTOGRAPHY BY RICHARD LENTINELLO

Chrysler has been America's unofficial convertible king since the early 1980s, having reintroduced millions of drivers to the joys of open-air motoring with its many approachably priced soft-top models. Perhaps the automaker was making up for having forfeited the convertible game 10 years earlier? Indeed, 1970 was the final model year for Chrysler-branded convertibles before the industry's mid-decade



shift away from soft tops, and the ultimate 1970 Chrysler convertible—both the last of its kind, and in terms of enduring appeal to our feature car's longtime owner—was the 300.

The Crimson convertible on these pages shared its nameplate with the famous "Letter Series" Chryslers of the 1950s and early 1960s, and retained aspects of those cars' sporty designs and ample power. But demand for those qualities in Chrysler Division products was falling, and the 300 itself would disappear after 1971. This generation of 300, available for three years, was in many ways one of the best; it blended designer Elwood Engel's modern, unique "fuselage" styling with a 5,000-weld-strong unit body, was built in small numbers, and would represent the last traditionally full-sized Chrysler performance model.

When this fuselage theme debuted for 1969, Chrysler advertised it as "A sweeping new design where body and frame are one." The ad line that stated, "Your next car can have no protruding chrome, bumps, knobs, gargoyles or wasted space," emphasized the cars' smooth, unadorned modern styling with integrated chrome bumpers. The 300's traditional bold cross-bar

grille covered trendy hidden quad headlamps, and its single-bar taillamps were split by a simple "300" nameplate. Changes were minimal for 1970, when the 300 grille and taillamp designs were attractively simplified.

It was that 1970 300 convertible that caught the eye of New Hampshire native Paul Vatcher, who'd been a Chrysler enthusiast since childhood, and whose appreciation was cemented when, at age 14, he inherited his grandfather's 1939 Imperial business coupe. "After that Imperial, I drove Fords—it was years before I could afford a new Chrysler. I was working as a manager at General Electric in 1970, when I visited my local dealer and placed the order. It would have red paint and a white interior and top, and would be my family car," he recalls. That car would be one of only 1,077 300 convertibles to leave the factory in 1970 (out of a total 2,201 convertible Chryslers), and its base price was \$5,195, the equivalent of roughly \$31,775 today.

As a premium model in Chrysler's lineup, the Vatcher family's 300 came nicely equipped with a 350hp V-8 engine, three-speed TorqueFlite automatic transmission, power-operated top, full wheel covers and an El Paso-grain vinyl-upholstered interior.



He chose to add a split front bench seat, power brakes and the Trailer Towing Package, which included a heavy-duty suspension, maximum-capacity cooling system, 3.23:1 axle ratio and more. Other available features just outside of Paul's budget included the 375hp, dual-exhaust "440 TNT" V-8 (standard on the limited-production 1970 300 Hurst), power front disc brakes, a Sure-Grip differential and Airtemp air conditioning.

"It was a beauty. Our family drove it, towing a pop-up trailer, to Nova Scotia, Newfoundland and Labrador, Canada, in the summer of 1971, where we had a very memorable vacation that included traveling on the Trans-Canada highway and hundreds of miles of unpaved roads, top down most of the way. It was amazing how many people stopped us to talk about that car; it was exciting for people in Newfoundland to see a convertible," Paul remembers. That 300 continued to serve him well for years. "The soft top wasn't lined, but the car had a good heater and warmed up quickly in the winter with the big V-8. Unfortunately, by 1976, it had about 72,000 miles and was rusting out from New Hampshire winter road salt, so I traded it in on a Chrysler sedan.

"Stupid me. For two years, I kicked myself because I loved that car, and my family loved it too. I read *Hemmings Motor News*, and in April 1978, I found an ad from a Ford dealership in Delaware, offering a 1970 Chrysler 300 convertible with



This interior features the desirable optional center console-mounted shifter; wide seats fold down nearly flat. Note generous rear leg room.

66,000 miles. That car was also red, but had a black interior, and they were asking \$3,000. I rode down with friends to look at it, and the car was in really good shape. I offered them \$2,000 in cash, and they took it. I bought a new battery, plus \$1.50 for acid! I drove it home, and have used it as a second, weekend car, ever since."

Both of Paul's Crimson 300 convertibles shared the 124-inch wheelbase that Chrysler used since 1965, and they stretched to a garage-straining 224.7 inches. Their power-assisted four-wheel drum brakes offered adequate stopping power, and the suspensions combined rear leaf springs with front torsion bars and anti-roll bars. The aforementioned standard 350hp V-8 displaced 440 cubic inches through a 4.33 x 3.75-inch bore and stroke. It had a 9.7:1 compression ratio, was topped with a four-barrel carburetor, and made its peak horsepower at 4,400 RPM, along with 480-lb.ft. of torque at 2,800 RPM.

This replacement 300 was better-equipped than his original, as it included bucket seats with a floor-mounted center console and gearshift. The car also came with power windows, an AM/FM Search Tuner radio with foot-button control, and front and rear bumper guards.

Once Paul got his second-chance Chrysler convertible, he wasn't about to let go, and the car has rewarded his dedication over the last 38 years and 70,000 miles with impressive reliability. He's a stickler for maintenance, attending to its needs promptly; "Initially, I would be filing the points or installing new points every 60 days or so—I couldn't keep points in that car, so I installed an electronic ignition, and now haven't touched it in 25 years. It's only required one brake rebuild in all that time, too."



This 440-cu.in. V-8 has not been apart in 136,000 miles, although the four-barrel carburetor has been rebuilt numerous times.

The intense Florida sunshine hasn't harmed the expansive black dashboard, despite Paul's preference for top-down motoring at all times. Although it doesn't have A/C, this car was nicely optioned with power windows and the AM/FM Search Tuner radio, which offers foot-controlled channel changing—note that button, next to the floor-mounted headlamp dimmer switch.



Paul goes on to say: "The engine takes regular gas—lots of it, at 12 MPG!—requires no lead additives, and doesn't burn a drop of oil. I have replaced the radiator and water pump—I don't have trouble getting parts for it. I'll rebuild the carburetor every five or six years, and change the oil annually. I run radials on it rather than the original bias-belted tires, because the radials drive a lot truer."

The Chrysler has also been treated to some cosmetic upgrades, in the form of a repaint in the original color, an engine bay detailing, and factory-style replacement upholstery for the front passenger seat and rear seat. "It had its original convertible top until five years ago; when it was being painted, the shop lowered the top with something in the well, and that broke the glass rear window. It would have cost as much to put new glass in that old top as it would to replace the entire thing, so it made sense to go that route—this top is just like the original, and fits perfectly, with no leaks."

The Vatchers are self-proclaimed "snow birds," and this 300 feels right at home in the Florida sunshine; Paul drove the car down the East Coast in October, making the 1,515-mile, solo trip in 22½ hours and stopping only for gas and food, top down the entire way. "I drive the car every two to three days, taking it out for breakfast or lunch, or going to car shows and cruises. I don't baby it, or worry about it in parking lots, because I just love to drive it down here," he admits, adding that he racks up about 1,500 miles a year. Paul enjoys keeping the car clean, preferring Jax Wax Liquid Carnauba Paste Wax for its ease of use,

“It drives very, very well, and rides down the road like a boat. It has plenty of power. The transmission must still be in good shape, because sometimes I’ll lay rubber, for the fun of it...”



and regularly applies a UV protectant to the upholstery and top.

Never having experienced a 1970 Chrysler 300 convertible, we asked this dedicated enthusiast to take us along for a ride. "It drives very, very well, and rides down the road like a boat. It has plenty of power. The transmission must still be in good shape, because sometimes I'll lay rubber, for the fun of it," he says with a laugh. "All the windows work, although the back windows are moving kind of slow now, with age. The front vent windows work great for directing air inside, because it doesn't have air conditioning, something I wish it did."

"Everywhere I go, I have people come up to me and say, 'Gee, I had a car just like that,'" he continues. "But in the last two or three years, I haven't seen another 1970 Chrysler 300 anywhere. I don't know where they've all gone—perhaps they're tucked away in collections, or have gone overseas. One of my friends had a 1969, and when he sold his, it went to Europe. I've also had people approach me who want to buy this car. One fellow offered me \$30,000—mine was appraised for \$18,000—and he wanted to send it to Europe, too! I told him I wasn't interested in selling it, but if I ever am, I have his card."

Top-down adventures remain this rare Mopar's *raison d'être*, and Paul is pondering something special for this summer: "I'd like to go back to Newfoundland, and up to Labrador, to see how it's changed." We'll bet one thing hasn't changed—a red 1970 Chrysler 300 convertible will turn as many heads in 2016 as one did 45 years ago. 🐾



Disappearing Act

Hidden for 44 years, a one-family-owned 1951 Packard 200 Touring Sedan returns to the road

WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY DAVID LaCHANCE

In the summer of 1951, the time had come for Joe Borish to buy his first brand-new car. He visited the Agnew Auto Company in nearby Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and drove home in a 1951 Packard 200 Touring Sedan.

Even though it was from Packard's least expensive line, and was delivered with a heater, a push-button radio and an Ultramatic automatic transmission as its only options, the 200 was still a premium car, and cost Borish \$2,915.50—putting it in the neighborhood of a Cadillac Series 61 or a Chrysler Imperial. He got \$517 for the 1941 Packard he traded in, put down \$1,007 in cash and made 18 monthly payments of \$90.

Introduced for the 1951 model year

with an up-to-date body style, the 200 was offered in both Standard and Deluxe models. Known as the 24th Series line of Packards, the Standard line was offered in three body styles—four-door Touring Sedan, two-door Club Sedan and two-door Business Coupe—while the more expensive Deluxe models could be had as either a four-door Sedan or a two-door Club Sedan. So popular was this new, affordable Packard with its modern contemporary style that 71,362 examples were sold, with





The push-button radio and Ultramatic automatic transmission were factory options. The car covered just 18,904 miles in its first 60 years.



47,052 buyers opting for the higher priced Deluxe models.

We don't know what led Borish to choose a 1951 model—was it the all-new styling?—but we do know that he treasured the Packard. A veteran of World War II, he was serving in the Army National Guard, and used the car only to drive to his training sessions. We also know that he had a tendency to tinker with his car.

Packard aficionados might already have noticed that this 200 has been dressed up beyond its modest origins. The windshield visor and the outside mirror, for instance, were options that the car lacked when Borish bought it. The really

well versed might be able to tell you that the three medallions on the rear fenders date from 1952, the chrome add-on rear fins became available in 1953, and the finned headlamp bezels appeared in 1954. Evidently, Borish paid attention to Packard's year-to-year changes, and picked out what he liked for his car.

Not all of the changes were cosmetic. He added a Motor Minder vacuum gauge to the dashboard, as well as an ammeter and an oil pressure gauge. A vacuum-operated rear window wiper and a pair of back-up lamps, both Packard accessories, were other additions.

In 1963, Borish stopped driving the

car, parking it in his garage with the intention of passing it down to his son. "He told me that he used to get the car running once a year, pull it out, let it run a little bit and then put it back in the garage," says Joe Zalar, the Packard's current caretaker. This went on until 1980, when tragedy struck: Borish's son was killed in a traffic accident. From then on, Borish largely neglected the old Packard.

Joe got to know Borish in 2005, while dating his granddaughter Jen (Joe and Jen have since married). Jen told him about the old Packard, and Borish was happy to give Joe a tour on his first visit to the house. "We went down and looked at it, and it was cov-



The least expensive model in Packard's lineup for 1951, the 200 Standard featured simple, durable cloth upholstery. The original interior in this car needed only steam cleaning to look like new; even the utilitarian rubber floor mats are undamaged. Interior dimensions are generous.



ered with sheets and blankets. I lifted up the side, and I saw the color. I looked inside, and it was full of toilet paper, paper towels and other dry goods, just stored in the car," Joe says. "I asked him if the car ran, and he said, 'I haven't had it running in a few years. I think I could probably have it running in a week or two.' So I said, 'Why don't you?' He was 83 or 84 years old at the time, but he was healthy, and he was still able to do things. He said, 'Ah, we'll see.' And he just never got around to it. I don't think he was that interested in getting the car running."

When Borish died suddenly in 2007, the family decided that the Packard should go to Joe and Jen. Joe wasn't immediately sold on the idea. "I liked cars, but I wasn't big on that era of car at the time," he explains. "I thought, it would be nice to have, but I don't want a dinosaur sitting in my garage that I can't do anything with. So that's when we decided to take a look at it to see how bad it was."

Dragged into the daylight for the first

time in 44 years, the Packard proved to be in surprisingly good condition. True, the 135-horsepower 288-cu.in. straight-eight engine was frozen, the fuel line was rusted through and the brake fluid had turned to paste, but the floor pans and the frame rails were solid, and the odometer stood at just 18,904 miles. "I knew that it was going to need work to the engine, transmission, rear end, brakes and mechanicals. But everything was there, and everything was solid. So we decided to go ahead and take the car."

Joe at the time owned a 1972 Dodge Dart Swinger, and had no experience with American cars of the Fifties. By good fortune, he met a Fifties car enthusiast named Carl Ventresca at a local car show. Joe told him about the Packard, and Carl suggested that he get in touch with Jim Gibbons, a Carnegie, Pennsylvania, mechanic who could make the required repairs. It took repeated calls to get Carl and Jim to Joe's house to look at the Packard—"everybody that has a car sitting in their garage, they think it's

a gem, and it's usually a rust bucket," Joe says—but they were pleasantly surprised with what they found. "This was an honest, solid car. This car was worth rebuilding the engine."

The Packard was trailered to Jim's house, where the engine and transmission were removed. Joe then trailered the body back to his house. A tear-down of the engine revealed that piston number seven had become frozen in its bore. The cylinder head and block were Magnafluxed for cracks, and the engine rebuilt using new parts from Kanter Auto Products and, at times, the local NAPA store.

Jim's original estimate of six months turned into three years, but in 2011, the engine and transmission were ready for installation. "At this point, I wanted to be able to drive the car home—I didn't want to trailer it anymore," Joe says. New fuel lines were also installed, the brake system and differential rebuilt, and the powertrain installed. Joe had had the radiator re-cored,



The 288-cu.in. straight-eight engine had become frozen from decades of disuse, and had to be rebuilt. The radiator was re-cored when the original was found to be impossible to repair. The windshield washer was one of many factory options installed by the car's first owner.

and the gas tank cleaned. In October 2011, Joe drove his Packard for the first time.

What was that like? "It was awesome," he enthuses. Joe didn't realize it, but that first drive was a nail-biter for Jim, who had come along to see if the Ultramatic transmission would behave. The Ultramatic employs a torque converter lockup at cruising speeds, and if it doesn't unlock when the car slows, the engine will stall. The old Packard performed flawlessly, to the relief of Jim, who had been careful not to change any of the transmission's adjustments.

The Packard 200 still looked like a barn find when Joe drove it to its first show, where he immediately learned something about the appeal of Fifties cars. "With my Dart, I'd take it to a car show and everyone would point out every little nick and every little scratch—'That's not right, this isn't right.' I don't want to hear that. I know it's not perfect. The Packard's imperfections, the patina, that's what they enjoy," he says. "Guys that are into the Fifties-style cars seem so much more interested in the history of the car than the guys that are into the muscle cars. People seem genuinely interested in the Packard. It's a totally different crowd."

Joe eventually had the car detailed. The mint-green Turquoise Blue paint, which is mostly original, regained its sheen through buffing and waxing, while the cloth interior needed nothing more than a steam cleaning. That's the condition it was in when we stumbled on it at the 2015 Pittsburgh Vintage Grand Prix, which, aside from local



“It floats down the highway smoother than a lot of cars today. When you close the door, you hear it close, you feel it—it’s not a tin can. That’s why I really like the car.”



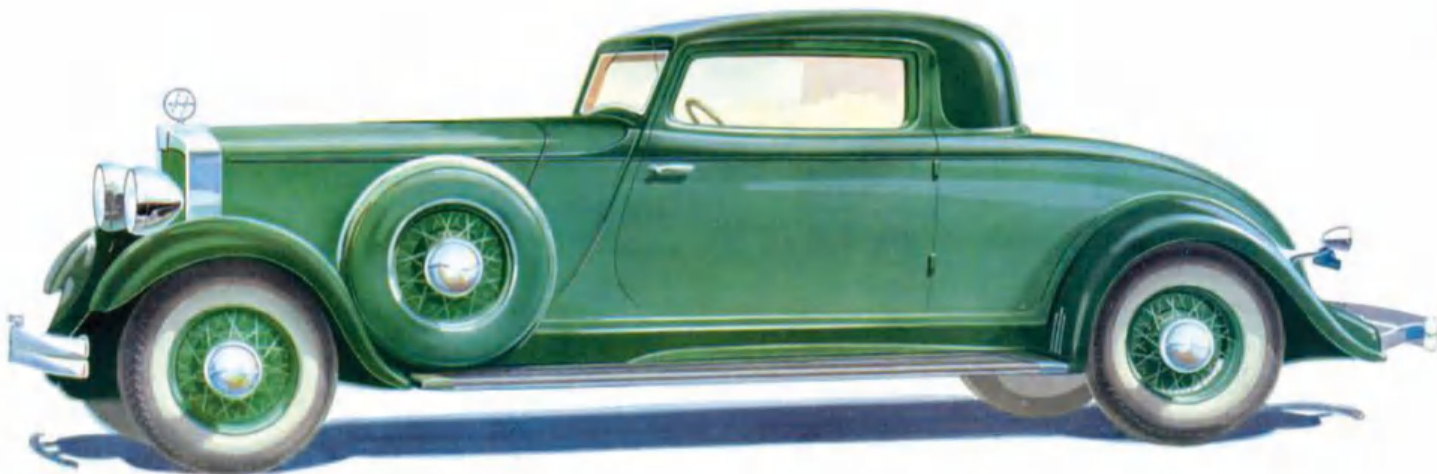
cruise-ins, was the car's first real showing.

The Packard has won Joe over, so much so that he's sold the Dart. "I was a Mopar guy, really, and I was interested in the muscle car era. I was never interested in purchasing a Fifties-era car or fixing one up, because it just wasn't my cup of tea. I wanted something sporty, loud and fast—and this car is not sporty, it's not loud and it's not fast. It's none of the above. But it's just so well built, and rides so smoothly down the highway. It floats down the highway smoother than a lot of cars today. When you close the door, you hear it close, you feel it—it's not a tin can. That's why I really like the car."

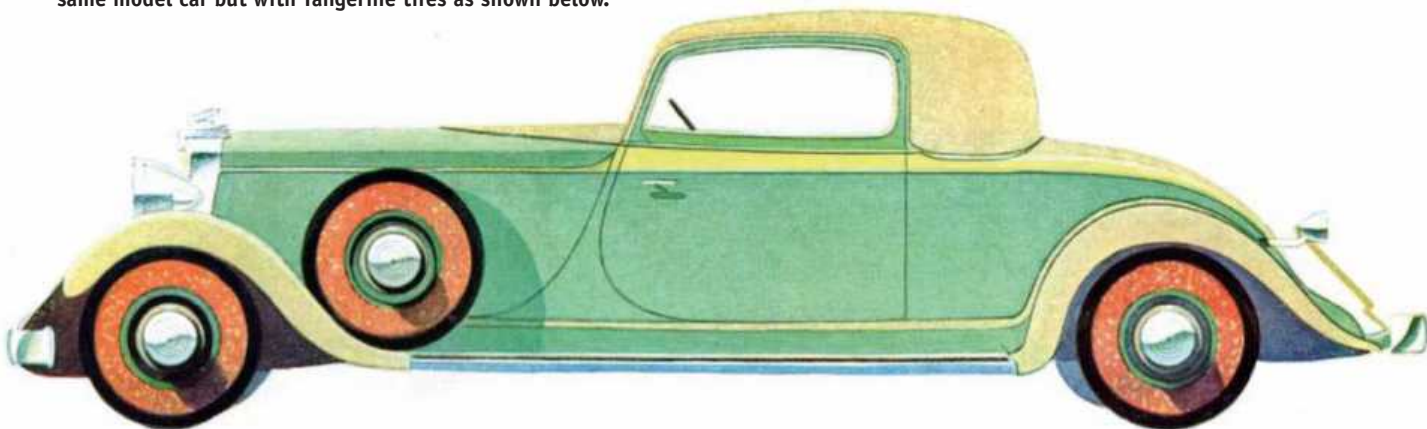
It might not be fast, but the Packard is satisfying to drive. "You feel like you're actually driving," Joe tells us. "You feel like you're doing something, to stop the car, to turn the car. I think these cars made people better drivers, because you had to think about what you were doing."

"You're not one-hand driving that car," Joe laughs. "It's two hands on the wheel, make sure you're paying attention, make sure that you're far enough away from other cars so that you can stop in time, because those brakes aren't going to stop you like they will in a modern car. You have to start turning a little bit sooner. I probably drive the car a lot slower than people want me to, but it's just a joy to drive. When I get it out on the highway, I'm going 55 MPH, and it feels like you're floating. Cars are flying by me, going 70. But I'm enjoying every second of it." 🏁





This is an illustration from the Hupmobile company sales literature. Compare it to the artwork B.F. Goodrich had its artists render of the same model car but with Tangerine tires as shown below.



The description of this Hupmobile coupe notes that the car was envisioned as being painted light blue-green with light buff trim and Tangerine tire sidewalls. B.F. Goodrich stated: "Select these new tires as you would select a rug or a piece of furniture."

Walls of Color

An Alternative to Black and Whitewall Tires

BY WALT GOSDEN • ILLUSTRATIONS COURTESY OF THE WALT GOSDEN COLLECTION

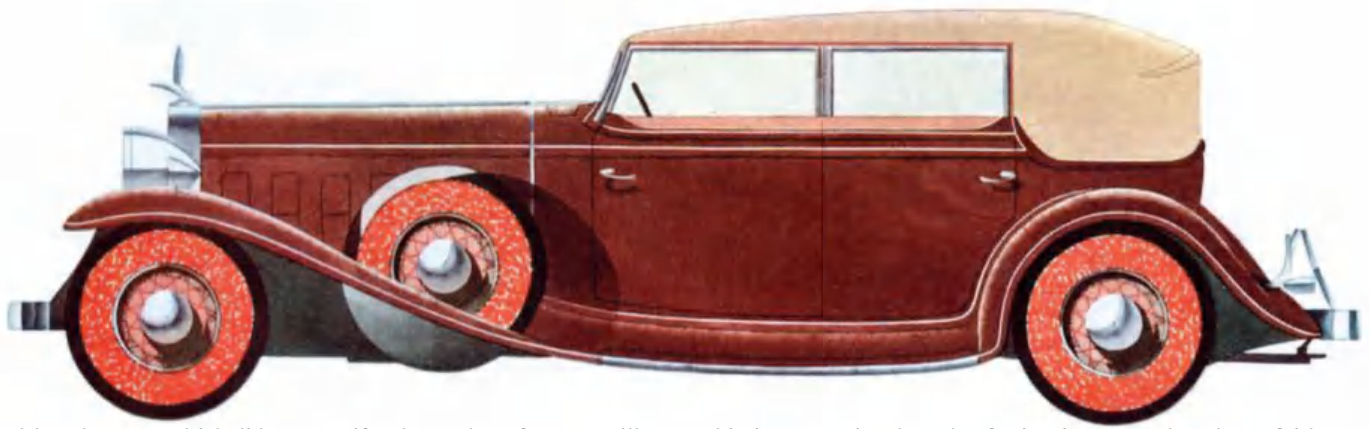
The debate over the merits of black or white sidewalls on tires for cars—especially those of the pre-WWII era—has been going on for decades, and I expect will continue for many years to come. There are two camps: Those who feel no car needs, or looks good with, whitewall tires, because they are bright, showy and don't appear authentic; and there are those who believe that cars *do* look good with whitewalls, and think that they add a tasteful accent and perhaps a bit of class. The question of white versus blackwalls is one that is so

polarizing that it could almost be debated like a political issue. Just as there are diehard Republicans and Democrats, so, too, are there people who prefer white or blackwall tires. Feelings and opinions run strong—so, too, does stubbornness.

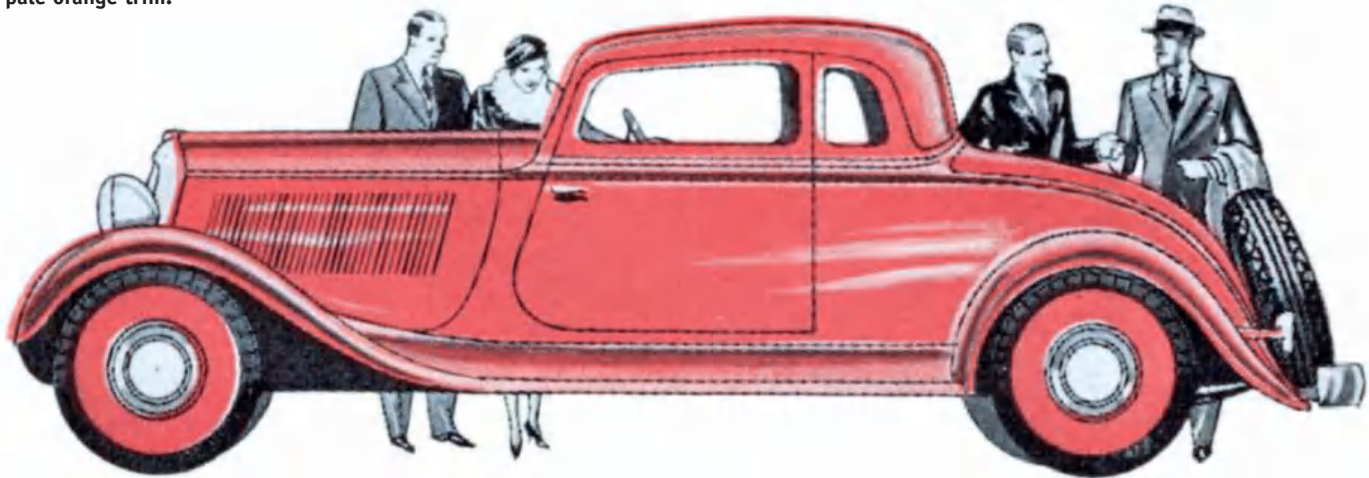
To quote a huge brochure that addressed the subject of tires that was published in early 1933: "Suppose your house were being painted—and the only colors you could use for *trimming* were either black or white. That's what the situation *has* been, with your car. You could have your choice of tire colors, provided

only you selected either black or white." That choice broadened considerably, if only briefly, in the early years of the Great Depression. Colored sidewalls for tires that "are custom made for fine cars—for owners who desire distinctiveness," were available from B.F. Goodrich.

"For Proud Owners Only," is the phrase that the copywriters at B.F. Goodrich pitched to the car owners they thought would be prime customers for the manufacturer's unusual new tires. Persuasive verbiage was in full force. Since one had to make an effort to get



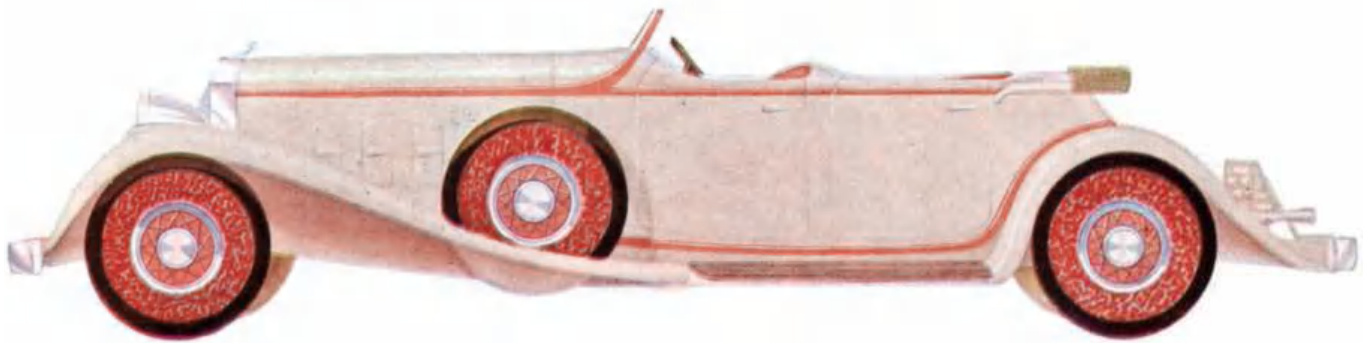
Although B.F. Goodrich did not specify what makes of car were illustrated in its promotional catalog for its tires, some brands are fairly obvious, such as this Cadillac, which is shown with Carnelian-colored sidewalls. The paint color of the car is described as chocolate with pale orange trim.



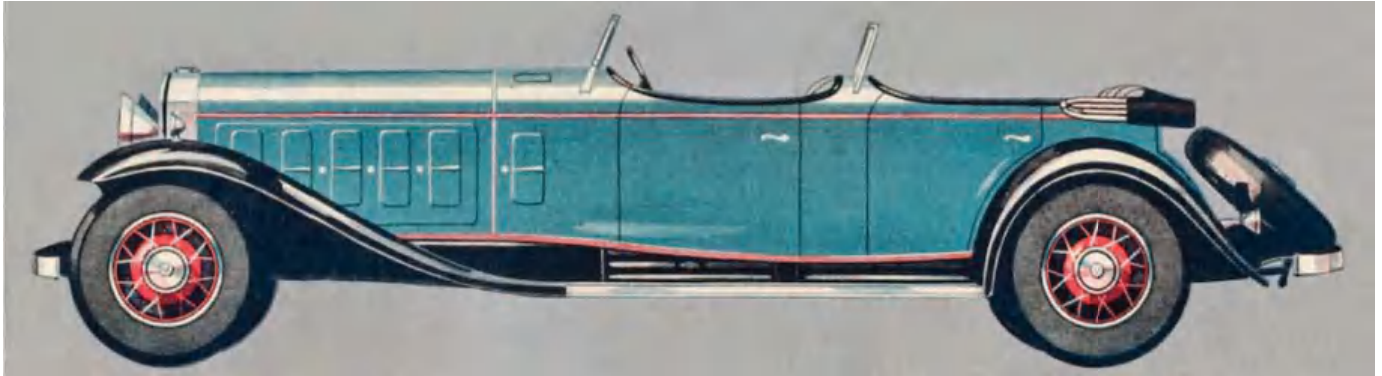
This illustration of a 1933 Plymouth model PC coupe with Red sidewalls was used in the B.F. Goodrich magazine advertisement. "They are technically harmonious, you may be sure," states the text.



Plymouth factory sales material illustrated the same model PC coupe as shown here. B.F. Goodrich didn't just rely on "fantasy" cars to attempt to sell its product.



The Cadillac phaeton in the B.F. Goodrich sales piece was radically stylized, but the car is still recognizable as a V-16 model. The tire color is described as Claret; paint work is peach and the color of the trim is "old rose."



Compared to the B.F. Goodrich version depicted above, this is what Cadillac used in its advertisements to sell the V-16 model.



Some of the B.F. Goodrich illustrations are so stylized that immediate recognition of a particular make is often not possible. Those interested had to write to B.F. Goodrich to receive detailed information about the manufacturer's "Color-Weld" line of tires.

the brochure telling about the tires, B.F. Goodrich management concluded that if a person sent for one, he seriously liked cars. "One needn't be haughty to be proud of one's car," the copy explains. "Aren't you the sort who likes to have bumpers and hubcaps polished? We think so—or this book wouldn't be in your hands."

The copywriters went on about how such a car owner would be the type to "sometimes take a cloth to wipe away a speck of dust from the hood or radiator even though you've just had the car washed and polished." They made a great effort to puff up him, describing him as

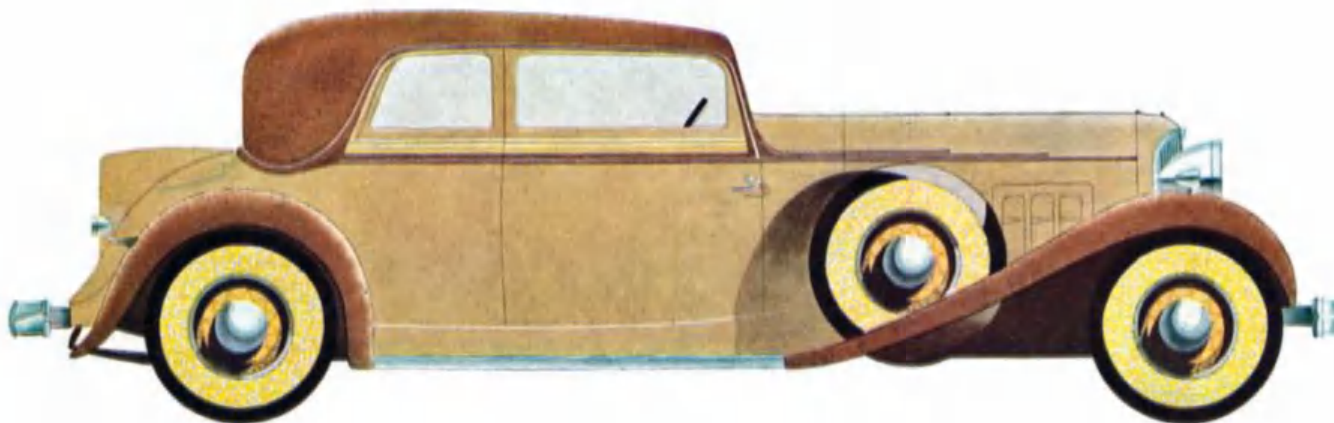
one who knows the importance of the extra little things on an automobile, and as such, is the sort of person who ought to have them.

B.F. Goodrich proclaimed that all Goodrich Safety Silvertowns were the safest tires ever built. The name "Silvertown" came from an industrial area a few miles east of central London, England, where a tire called the Palmer Cord was developed. B.F. Goodrich purchased rights and introduced its version in the United States as the Silvertown Cord. The great economic depression saw B.F. Goodrich suffer huge financial losses between 1930 and 1933, just as the automobile manufactur-

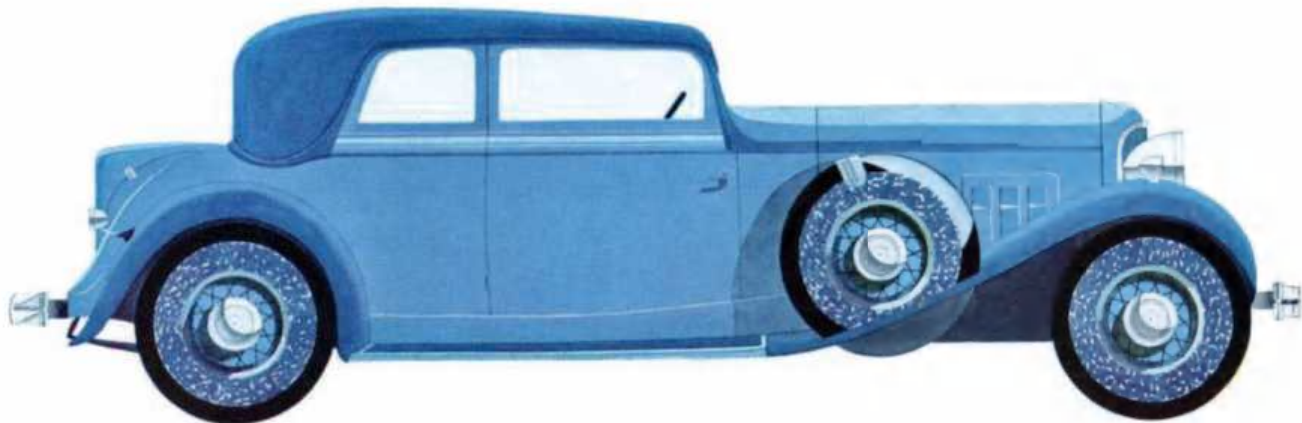
ers did. If cars didn't sell, neither did their components, and this included tires.

B.F. Goodrich was primarily a tire manufacturer; however, over the years it also designed and produced ice bags, hot water bottles, throat bags, rubber boots and gloves, canvas shoes, fan belts, radiator hoses and breast pumps! The B.F. Goodrich Silvertown Cord orchestra was active in recordings for RCA Victor, with vocal refrain by the Silver-Masked Tenor.

Although sales and production had slowed significantly, development of new and different tires to attract car owners' attention continued. After several years of



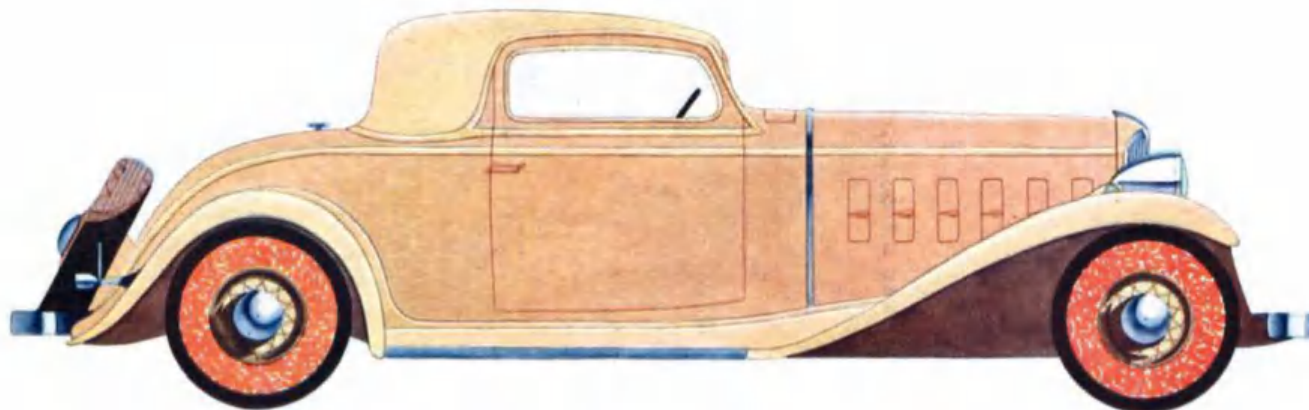
The Reo Royale was a favorite car featured in numerous illustrations to promote B.F. Goodrich's special new tires. They serve in many of the profile illustrations in a variety of body types.



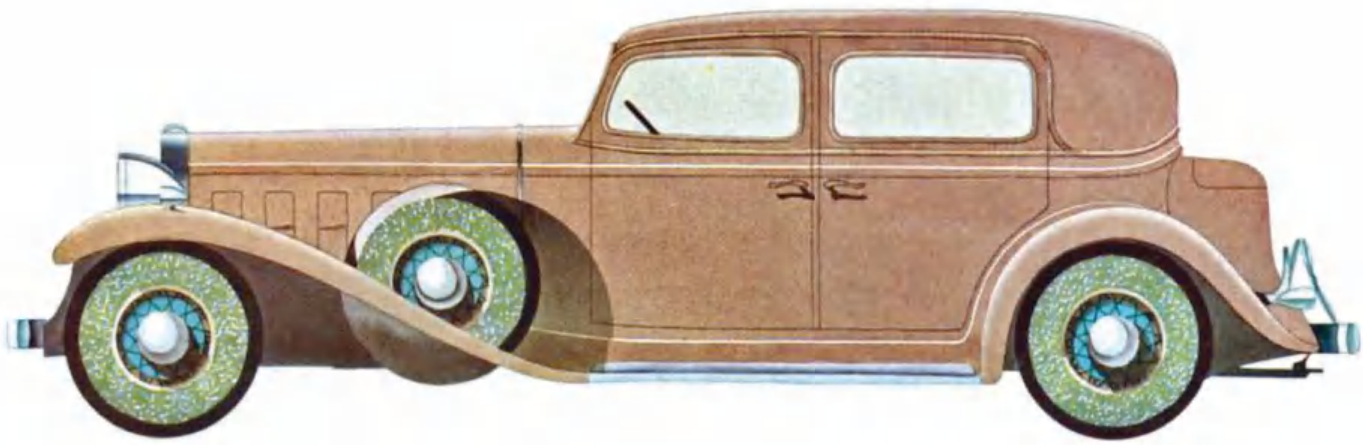
This Reo Royale is depicted with Granite-colored tire sidewalls, while the car's body color is bright blue with medium- and pale-blue trim.



Sandstone tire color appears on this black with vermillion and brown trim Packard five-passenger coupe. *MoToR* magazine reports, "The colored tires share a mottled effect and a scintillating surface appearance."



The illustration of this Nash coupe has Sandstone tires against a light orange body with deep ivory trim.



This La Salle club sedan is illustrated with Granite colored tires against a gray body with gray-blue trim.



Although the shell, fender lamps and headlamps do not say Franklin V-12, the fender line and body style certainly do. It would be difficult to imagine a real car of this size and style having the Carnation colored tires with medium-red body and brown trim.



This deep-blue sedan with black trim, I believe, was a figment of the artist's imagination and features Granite colored tires. The tire company notes, "The owner of a custom-built or custom painted car for instance, will find color cards on file with his B.F. Goodrich dealer."

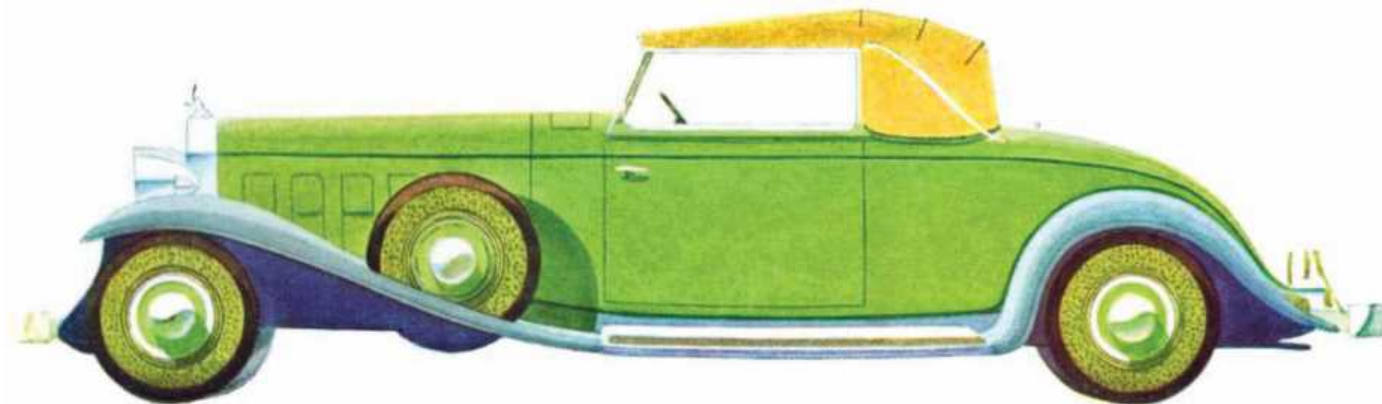
development, B.F. Goodrich announced with great flair and a double-page advertisement in the *MoToR* annual show edition for January 1933: "New beauty for this year's smart car. B.F. Goodrich custom-built Silvertowns in colors!" The tires were fitted to cars at various automobile shows around the country, and the casings were treated in a number of hue combinations that Goodrich guaranteed would retain their brilliance

throughout the life of the tire.

B.F. Goodrich called the process of applying the colored sidewalls "Color-Weld;" it was exclusive to that brand of tire. The manufacturer noted in a lavish promotional catalog that the tread part of the tire that touches the road was still the same tough, black rubber used in all B.F. Goodrich Silvertowns. The sidewalls, however, were ingrained with pigmented rubber, and don't appear to be completely

smooth like regular black and whitewall tires are. The color would not wash off, wear off or fade.

The cost of the tires was never revealed in the company's advertisements or in the color promotional catalog that you had to send away for. All that these materials indicate is that the tires cost no more than any other deluxe tire. The tires were not kept in stock at B.F. Goodrich tire suppliers, but those locations did



This automobile strongly resembles a 1932 Buick series 90 and has Willow Green sidewalls against a green body with gray-blue trim.

have sample strips of the colors on offer. When you were ready to place your order, you did so with the B.F. Goodrich factory in Akron or Los Angeles, for delivery within a few days. If you were buying a new car, B.F. Goodrich urged you to inquire with your dealer about colored Silvertowns. They would be

dealer installed, not factory installed.

So, was it a gimmick on the part of the B.F. Goodrich Tire Company of Akron, Ohio? Was it a ruse? Or a sincere effort to present and offer a unique new look for the motorcar in 1933? One has to acknowledge that the effort was indeed very creative and brought to the market an

idea I'm sure many designers had thought about, but had never had the means to bring to fruition. Despite their lack of success in sales and corresponding short span of availability, the B.F. Goodrich custom-built Silvertowns in color are yet another interesting and curious facet of automotive marketing, and now, history. 🐉



Individual tires are illustrated to give the full effect as best could be accomplished on printed paper. Here is the manufacturer's Granite Blue tire.



This is the Bronze version of the B.F. Goodrich tire. The sales catalog promoting the tire line proclaims, "New feathers for the peacock."



The English Vermilion sidewalls must have been quite an eyeful. Cardinal, Claret and Carnelian colored tires were also offered.



There were several shades of green sidewalls available, such as this Willow color. There was also Lime and Jade green.



The yellow shades were represented by this Ochre color, as well as by Amber, Bronze and, to add a bit of orange, Tangerine.



The Pearl color had a silver tint to it. Approximately 20 different colors were available to choose from.

Helen Dryden

Pioneering gatecrasher of the boys-only industrial design club



NATIONAL EDITORIAL ASSOCIATION, 1935

BY ED HEYS • PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY OF RICHARD QUINN AND THE ED HEYS ARCHIVE

Helen Dryden was born in Philadelphia, in November, 1887. Early on, she demonstrated an interest and abilities in the fine arts that led her to briefly attend the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts. After working a year in Philadelphia, she moved to New York City around 1909. She longed to produce fashion illustrations, but her unconventional style was rejected at several publishing houses. An editor at *Vogue* also declined her work, though her samples were kept on file.

In 1909, Condé Nast purchased *Vogue* and became its publisher. Reviewing recent submissions, the new publisher embraced her simplified modern illustrative style, and she was hired as a fashion editor. Dryden illustrated many of the influential

magazine's covers from at least 1912 to 1922, and by doing so, became a leading trendsetter for the high-fashion social elite. It has been reported that within a few years of her numerous initial rejections she was regularly referred to as America's most highly paid female artist.

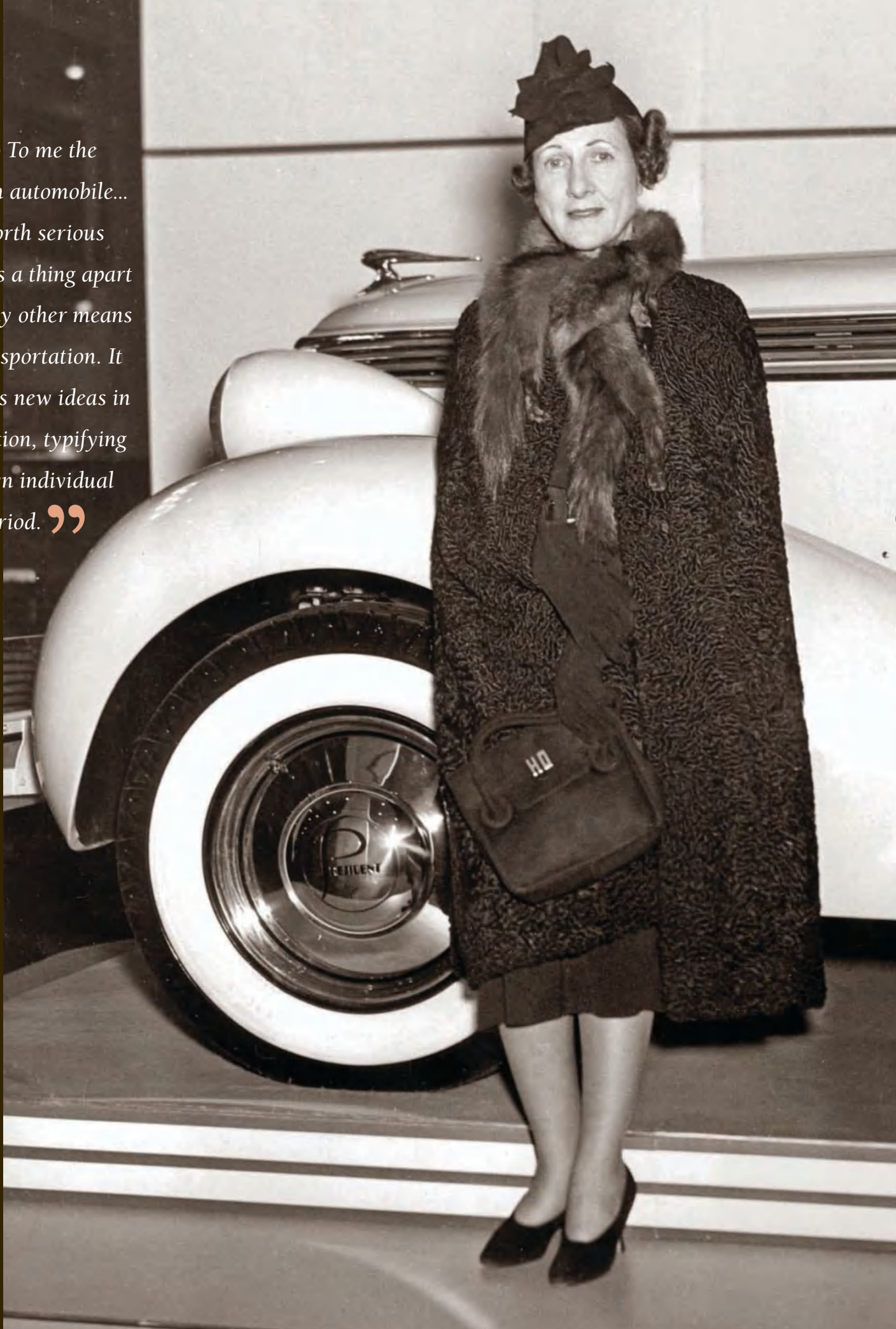
Condé Nast employed many artists during Dryden's tenure, including, in 1919, fashion illustrator and *Ziegfeld Follies* costume designer Raymond Loewy.

Concurrent with her responsibilities at *Vogue*, Dryden launched a career as a Broadway theater costume designer, sometimes drawing rave reviews even when the plays did not. She illustrated advertisements for Aberfoyle dress fabrics and Cutex cosmetics, and designed patterns for Imperial Wallpaper. By 1927 she

had moved on to illustrating covers for *Delineator*, a more mainstream women's fashion and home-making magazine, employing her increasingly angular and stark Art Deco style.

From there, she dared to invade the boys-only industrial design arena. Dryden blossomed into a decorative lighting designer for Revere Copper in Rome, New York, and an automotive hardware stylist for the Dura Company of Toledo, Ohio. As reported in the July 27, 1929, issue of *Automobile Topics*, "Helen Dryden, who has been called America's highest paid woman artist, has been appointed director of design... of automobile body hardware... She is recognized as an international authority on design, style and decoration and is expected to exert

“To me the modern automobile... is worth serious study as a thing apart from any other means of transportation. It deserves new ideas in decoration, typifying its own individual period.”





Studebaker President ads promoting the 1936 model give Helen Dryden headline status for her simplified and distinctive contemporary styling of interior and exterior details.

an important creative influence in the automotive field."

Her position at Dura—at a reported \$35,000 per year—ended abruptly only months later with a wave of layoffs as a result of the October 1929 stock market crash, as her much lower-paid successor, George Walker, recalled in a 1985 interview with David Crippen for the Edsel B. Ford Design History Center.

But Dryden retained her affiliation with Dura; in an *Automobile Topics* article from January 1930, she was referred to as a Dura design consultant and reported that "I can see many opportunities for really well-dressed cars done in true modern style... I mean simplicity which now more than ever has come into its own as true art. Color... must be touched upon in considering simplicity. Soft neutral shades are most popular among women of taste and distinction."

Dryden appeared as one of several celebrities in an advertisement for 1930 Studebakers, which were "styled as befits champions by those whose word in art carries authority." She was also referenced, along with Norman Bel Geddes, in a less complimentary January 13, 1930, *TIME* review of the 30th annual National Automobile Show, "Obviously the recent U.S. renaissance in bathroom fixtures and furniture has smitten the automobile. Some of the artists responsible for the renaissance are now working on auto bodies."

In an article Dryden authored for the January 25, 1930, issue of *Automobile Topics*, she opined that "whatever fault lies with automobile design and fittings today, may be attributed to the tendency to go back to stage-coach days for inspiration, instead of thinking in modern terms... I



can regard curves and knobs—looking for all the world like big lumps of taffy—as nothing more or less than relics of the past, designs that have been handed down from past generations.

"Here we have a vehicle like none other in the history of the world. Let us... invent complimentary fittings and adornments sleek, straight and slim. To me the modern automobile... is worth serious study as a thing apart from any other means of transportation. It deserves new ideas in decoration, typifying its own individual period."

Beyond broad statements, she offered specific recommendations: "In seeking

simplicity in modern motor car design, which to me is so essential, there are many things to be considered. I feel that real progress will have been made when more car interiors have recessed ash receivers rather than those little wooden boxes that we have grown accustomed to seeing stuck on the side of the car. An ideal arrangement for disposing of ashes in the deluxe type of vehicle would seem to me to be a small pocket recessed in the wall, covered with a metal door on a hinge. The ashes could easily be dropped inside and the smooth face of the wall would not be disturbed."

She also addressed marketing issues: "With womankind influencing the sale of automobiles in greater numbers today than ever before, it is essential to consider what will have the greatest appeal to her taste and what will best meet her requirements. Her car must afford a suitable background for her social life, her clothes, her manner of living."

The October 25, 1930, issue of *Automobile Topics* revealed that Dryden traveled abroad to review the Paris Salon and stated that "during the past year Miss Dryden has widened the recognition she has won in the art world through her achievements in bringing new ideas of design into the automotive field. As consultant to the Dura Company in evolving new types of automobile hardware she has been brought in close touch with the modern automobile and has viewed its decoration not alone from the standpoint of artist and stylist, but through the eyes of a woman..."

EXCITING NEW *Studebaker* **STYLING**

INSPIRED BY GIFTED HELEN DRYDEN

IN these spotlight cars of 1937, famous Helen Dryden, foremost stylist of her day, again has collaborated with Studebaker's distinguished body engineers to create glorious new motor car body design, refreshingly vigorous and smart.

Definitely different in appearance from any other cars you'll see, from their silvery "Winged Victory" radiator grilles and louvers to their impressively air-curved rear decks, these spirited new Dictators and Presidents achieve their distinction by adhering to fundamental good taste.

Their long flowing, beautifully rounded hoods have a graceful one-piece top devoid of the customary unsightly center ridge. It lifts up from the front for radiator and engine servicing and holds securely in position till pulled down again.

The gleamingly lacquered front fenders of heavy steel are wider and lower than any others you'll see... and they're cleverly air-foiled in true airplane manner. The torpedos shaped headlamps are

A sales brochure for 1937 Studebakers gives page-one status to Helen Dryden's styling cues,

In that issue, Dryden reported, "Europe seems to give the designer a free hand in developing his ideas, and as a result the Salon was a refreshing contrast to our own very uniform exhibits... More and more carrossiers are becoming converted to the modern school of design which merely insists that a thing should be built as simply and honestly as possible... the French are building cars lower, flatter, and simpler, thereby, reducing wind resistance and giving emphasis to the lines of speed."

"An Austro-Daimler four-passenger coupe built in Vienna... was long and low and very simple... there was no hood hinge, the hood being made in three pieces with the sides clamping down the top... how smart [it] appeared merely because of the absence of the ridge down the center."

"Due to my experience in designing automobile hardware... I am convinced that the French designers strike a higher level of luxury... than we have yet achieved in America... When line and proportion are perfect, only then is that illusive quality of chic to be found..."

The National Alliance of Art and Industry awarded Dryden an honorable mention as a commercial designer in the automotive field for 1932. Then in November 1934, Dryden was hired as a stylist at Studebaker, while she continued to report on the state of automotive design and pursue her other commercial design activities.

The January 9, 1935, edition of *The New York Times* included coverage of the opening of the 1935 Auto Show at



Studebaker ads in 1937-'38 praise Helen Dryden's cleanly designed appointments and Raymond Loewy's streamlined exterior styling, though countless others contributed.

Grand Central Palace and lists Dryden as an industrial designer and style expert. The article reports that she found the new models to be "rather conservative in body contours, colors, upholstery and interior appointments."

The headline, "Fashion expert designed Studebaker President," greeted readers of the November 4, 1935, issue of *Automotive Topics*, and the article continued, "Studebaker's new President models are featuring interiors designed by Helen Dryden, fashion expert... a car outstanding for its simple smartness. All unnecessary trimmings have been removed from the outside and inside. Horizontal



lines prevail to emphasize the feeling of speed. Louvers and bumpers carry out the horizontal effect. Color is neutral... ash receivers are flat... " and its trunk hinges were relocated to the inside to allow a simple exterior shape. Dryden was quoted "...I have 'ensembled' the interior with the same care for detail and the same taste which I know women demand in their dress today."

TIME reported in its November 11, 1935, edition that "Studebaker's [1936 model] interior hardware and instrument panel was designed by Helen Dryden, one of the top U.S. industrial designers and one of the few women designers in the automotive field... she designed... hardware for Toledo's Dura Co., an automobile supplier. Her Studebaker instrument panel was one of the smartest at the Show. But Miss Dryden did not design Studebaker's 'hill-holder,' a worthwhile device that permits a driver to shift his foot from the brake to the accelerator on hills without having the car slip backward."

Dryden designed in conjunction with Raymond Loewy Associates when the firm came onboard at Studebaker in 1936. A long-time NYC resident, she likely worked with its New York City studio. While Raymond Loewy himself is often credited, Studebaker historian, Richard Quinn, suggests that much of the actual styling was performed by Loewy's talented subordinates, who often went for many years without proper credit. Loewy's recognized design abilities and name, aided by his sales abilities, however, were key to securing and retaining clients.

Given the complex interactive nature of the automotive design process—from theoretical artwork to mechanical road-

a unit with the hood. And the tremendously strong steel running boards, rubber mat and all, match the body colors. The wheels are domed discs.

A new, lower positioning of the propeller shaft and new frame design give these 1937 Studebakers exceptional interior roominess. The lower floors permit the use of true chair-height seats, while making possible higher doors. This increase of usable space combines with a flatter 18-gallon gasoline tank to provide truly enormous luggage capacity.

The beautifully streamlined Studebaker steel body, glistening with twelve enduring coats of paint, is still the world's strongest—with heavier steel girder reinforcements than any other car's.

But it is the finish and appointments of the interiors of these exciting new 1937 Studebakers that fully and



"THAT NEW DOUGLAS PLANE IS LIKE A STUDEBAKER WITH WINGS"

finally place them in a class apart from the promptest previous cars.

Luxurious upholstery, deftly tailored... every fitting and convenience you could hope to get even in the costliest of cars... the smartest looking instrument panels yet designed... combine to give the spacious interiors of these superb new Dictators and Presidents the charm and friendliness of tastefully appointed living rooms. Helen Dryden has seen to that.



but also notes Loewy's streamlined GG1 and SS1 locomotives and "that new Douglas plane."

worthiness—suffice to say that countless individuals contributed to the end product. Add in various marketing reasons for mentioning who-designed-what, and the results are contradictory at best.

Dryden's name was given headline status in ads for the 1936 Studebaker President: "In its singularly beautiful, lavishly roomy interior, the genius of that famed industrial designer, the gifted Helen Dryden, has been expressed in fine fabric, beautifully tailored, and in fittings of advanced motif that are of impeccable good taste."

An advertisement for the 1937 State President proclaims, "Glorified inside and outside by the genius of Helen Dryden's styling, the State President belongs in the upper brackets of fine car luxury from its tiny fender lamps to its chromium strip running boards and its costly custom pillow type upholstery."

As quoted in a Studebaker ad, the December 1937 issue of *Magazine of Art* had little praise for 1938 cars in general: "The new cars this year are disappointing. However well they run, however safe, however economical they are, the designers have failed to produce better looking automobiles. To this generalization there is one exception: Studebaker brings out the car of the year and the best looking car in its history. Raymond Loewy shaped the exteriors and Helen Dryden designed the harmonious interiors..."

In their co-authored book, *A Century of Automotive Style*, Michael Lamm and Dave Hollis offer that, "Helen Dryden, the automotive interior designer, had consulted for Studebaker and would continue to work with Loewy until 1940." Her later association with Loewy may have been in connection with the firm's numerous clients other than Studebaker.

Richard Quinn, well-versed in *The Studebaker Wheel*, the company's in-house magazine, finds no reference to



The image of Helen Dryden that was used in the 1937 Studebaker brochure on page 62 was clearly borrowed from a circa 1929 press release photo shoot of her that appeared in several 1930 magazine articles covering her successful fashion illustration career. The brochure image was flipped horizontally and model cars were added. Inset shown as originally shot.

Helen Dryden after the September 1938 issue and offers that "I believe that date or shortly thereafter would represent her last connection with Studebaker.

Throughout her tenure at Studebaker, in addition to producing fashion illustrations, designing theatrical costumes, illustrating magazine covers and traveling abroad, Dryden exhibited work at the Brooklyn Museum as an American Union of Decorative Artists and Craftsmen member, applied for numerous patents for packaging containers, received awards for commercial design, entered design competitions, designed a piano for Hardman, Peck & Company and was a regular at New York A-list social gatherings and charitable fundraisers. She earned a reputation as a leading expert on contemporary design and was the last word on contemporary good taste. Helen Dryden was reported to have died in October, 1972. ☞

COURTESY RICHARD QUINN COLLECTION



Helen Dryden is seated at the speaker's table, attending a Studebaker dealers luncheon in New York City, November 1, 1935, with John F. Fennelly (left) and James G. Blaine.



For more information, photographs and illustrations, go to blog.hemmings.com and search "Helen Dryden" under the "Articles" pull-down menu.





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Scintillating SS

How a 1963 Chevrolet Impala SS transitioned from retired driver to show winner...in more than two decades

BY MATTHEW LITWIN • PHOTOGRAPHY BY RICHARD LENTINELLO
RESTORATION PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY OF JOHN DAVIS

Back in *Hemmings Classic Car* #134, editor Richard Lentinello penned a feature pertaining to the afternoon he spent photographing and enjoying the comfort and driving characteristics of this finely restored 1963 Chevrolet Impala SS owned by Joe Davis of Melbourne, Florida. Not just any run-of-the-mill, early decade, full-size Chevy, but one that had been ordered to exacting requirements that matched the sporty SS bucket seat package with the open-air convertible body style, and

powered by the economical 140hp 230-cu.in. straight-six backed by a two-speed Powerglide automatic. Certainly a relatively uncommon combination of equipment then, and unusual today. Now we would like to detail that car's restoration.

Joe wasn't the person responsible for how this Impala SS was ordered. He had been wanting to enter the collector car hobby and always appreciated the rear design of early Sixties Chevrolets, but it was his brother John's urging that ultimately led him to this particular example. Unfortunately,

the Impala had fallen into disrepair after a long life as a daily driver and a period of dormancy. A cursory examination told the tale: It was in need of more than casual refurbishment work. Nevertheless, Joe negotiated its purchase in November 1986 and hauled it to his home in Maryland.

"Sad to say, I had no long-term plan for the car other than to get it running well enough to license it in the state," said Joe. "Thoughts of a full restoration were not the first consideration. A month after I bought it, I had the transmission overhauled by





an experienced shop in Bethesda, which enabled me to title and register the car.”

Soon after, Joe and John—living in Lancaster, Pennsylvania—began to piece together plans to restore the old Chevrolet. Initially, there was an open slate of possibilities. While assessing the Impala’s needs, the notion of replacing the straight-six engine with a period V-8 entered the discussion.

According to John, “You have to

remember, in the late Eighties, there was no Internet and little in terms of reproduction parts for these cars. I bought a four-door V-8 Impala with the intent of using it, including the engine, as a donor for Joe’s convertible. At the same time, he had been vetting the convertible’s history and, in turn, discovered its authenticity. In the end, the donor was a 32,000-mile one-owner original that I just could not bring myself

to tear apart, and Joe had determined he wanted the convertible to remain as close to factory-stock as possible.”

With the decision made to retain its stock characteristics, the brothers’ focus shifted towards the search for parts; their proximity to the Carlisle swap meets affording them the opportunity to do so regularly. However, just as the duo began to disassemble the Impala in early 1988, John had



After the Chevrolet Impala's factory-built mechanical specifications and SS package were verified, and its immediately known restoration needs were further assessed, the project commenced in the latter months of 1989.



Removing the hood and several key front end trim items provided easier access to the 230-cu.in. straight-six engine, which was partially disassembled to shed weight, making the task of its extraction from the chassis considerably more manageable.



The engine and transmission, as well as the rest of the front body panels and associated support brackets, were removed. At that time, it became apparent that rust extended beyond the fender's outer skin; in this case, the lower cowl was badly corroded.



Initially, it was thought that the body mount positions and their associated braces would be primary areas of concern for corrosion; however, stripping the interior to bare metal uncovered more extensive damage to the front floorpan than previously anticipated.



After a three-year hiatus, the Impala's restoration continued in early 1991. The body was lifted off, and the frame was delivered for a date with a media blaster. Fortunately, the cleansing did not reveal any fatigued metal.



After being removed from the frame, the body was braced to prevent warping and placed on a rotisserie, providing easier access to the underside. Several precisely fabricated patch panels have already been carefully MIG-welded into place at this stage.



To avoid using plastic filler as much as possible, several coats of primer were applied to the body and sanded. To help ensure a smooth surface, the panels were "dusted" with black paint, which would then reveal any high or low points during sanding.



The next phase of the restoration was applying three coats of black base coat, followed by eight applications of clearcoat to all exterior surfaces, which, after wetsanding and buffing, resulted in a very deep and, ultimately, long-lasting finish.



As the body received its treatment, the chassis underwent its own restoration. Given a coat of black urethane enamel, the entire suspension system was refinished, accompanied by new brake and fuel lines before the engine and transmission were bolted in.



By the spring of 1993, the body had finally been lowered onto and bolted to the restored chassis. This included the front fenders and support brackets, all of which were carefully aligned with the primary shell for a better-than-factory finish.



Completion of the Impala's restoration was delayed for a number of years. In 2009, having been relocated from Pennsylvania to North Carolina, the Chevrolet was finally dusted off and a new upholstery kit was carefully installed, along with associated trim.



Although a new convertible top will be the ultimate step in the restoration, the final push is well under way with the installation of the Impala's original restored trim, or in the case of the wheels, new old stock SS covers that had been purchased earlier.



While visual appeal is paramount to the exterior's restoration, it's also the case with the interior. Every conceivable component—great and small—including the intricate engine-turned insert, was painstakingly re-detailed personally or restored by a specialty facility.

to put the project on hiatus to focus on his health. By late 1989, John finally felt well enough to pick up the Impala's restoration once again, swiftly pulling the engine and transmission from their cradles, removing trim, and bolt-on body panels, as well as the interior. As disassembly progressed, the amount of corrosion correction required increased.

"When the fenders came off, a couple things happened. They had been eaten up by rust at the bottom, behind the wheel openings, and it had gotten into the integrated support," John tells us. "We had a hard time justifying tearing the fenders apart, and, fortunately, we were able to find a far cleaner pair at Carlisle. The passenger-side fender is secured by a bolt that goes straight up through the panel to the cowl, and that entire area was badly rusted. All of the floorpans were rusted through, as most early '60s Impalas are, and most of the body supports were pretty shot. I was looking at a lot of fabrication work; at the

time, you could buy reproduction body mounts and some floorpan sections, but that was about it."

As disassembly continued, the ailing 230-cu.in. straight-six engine was delivered to Jim Rhea's Machine Shop, Rockville, Maryland, in January 1990. "As with the rest of the car, I wanted it rebuilt to factory specs. Other than a slight overbore to clean the cylinder walls and the installation of hardened valve seats, no internal upgrades were made. It has a stock camshaft, lifters and such," says Joe. John adds, "Jim and his staff discovered that the block had a crack in it. He repaired it, not by welding, but rather by pinning. You would be hard-pressed to find the repair today, and we can tell you with continued confidence that the engine does not leak a drop of fluid."

Exactly one year after the engine had been sent for its rebuild, the body had finally been completely stripped and was ready for the next phase of the restoration. "We took it from Joe's house in

Maryland to a really good friend of mine, J.R. Burkholder, where we separated the body from the frame and mounted it to a rotisserie once we had properly braced it. Bracing the body, with the doors removed, prevents the body from twisting, especially if you have to do a lot of fabrication work. Working with J.R.'s team at his shop, we were finally able to start fabrication and MIG welding in the necessary patch panels throughout the body and undercarriage," says John.

Before fabrication work could begin in earnest, the team removed what remained of the factory paint and primer using a chemical stripper and sanding discs. The process did ease some concerns; no body filler or hidden collision damage was found. Likewise, a comparatively minimal amount of work was all that was required to save the original quarter panels, doors, decklid and hood. Once bare metal was exposed, the Impala's body was given a protective layer of sealer primer to prevent

owner's view



John is the experienced restorer here; I was and continue to be the helper. What always amazes me about the restoration is the paint work. The car was painted in 1992 and, to this day, people who see the car rave about how good the paint looks. The black finish and those long quarter panels really serve to highlight any flaws, waves, or ripples—there are none.

— Joe Davis (seated, rear)

A lot of people will give you many different opinions about restorations. My brother will say he thought the car was in pretty poor shape. Today, I restore cars that are 10 times worse than this one was. For a car that was always driven in eastern Pennsylvania, I would say it was in pretty doggone good shape when we got it. It's probably one of the longest restorations in history, but it has weathered and aged very well, and was well worth the effort.

— John Davis (seated, front)

flash rust from occurring.

"It took about a year to finish the body's fabrication work, by which point we were ready to start applying Ditzler primer; about 10 coats in all," John remembers. "It sounds like a lot, but we used precious little filler, instead using the primer to produce a smooth surface. Between applications we'd feather some black paint on top of it, then block sand the panels. This process reveals high and low spots, so in reality a lot of primer had been sanded off by the time we were ready to apply three coats of Ditzler Tuxedo Black—the Impala's original color—topped with eight coats of Ditzler clearcoat, in 1992. Wet sanding and buffing produced a deep finish."

While the body received its corrective measures, the chassis had been returned to Joe's garage, where it was further stripped of the remaining suspension and brake components, as well as the differential. The frame was then sandblasted and, having exhibited no corrosion issues, given an application of durable Imron black urethane enamel.

"The frame was in remarkable condition, considering its eastern Pennsylvania origins. So was the differential. All we did to it was clean it up, add fresh gear oil and prep it for reinstallation, along with the suspension," John says. "We refinished parts such as the control arms and installed new bushings, ball joints and tie rod ends, along with an entirely new brake and exhaust system. Timing worked out for us, as we had the entire chassis rebuilt—including the installation of the engine and redetailed transmission—just as the refinished body was done and ready to be bolted back into



The vastness of space under the hood is apparent with the Impala's factory-original 230-cu.in. straight-six engine installed; this means that any detail flaws would be easily visible.

place by February 1993. The next step was to reinstall the doors, fenders, hood and decklid and carefully realign each of them."

Final reassembly, in theory, should have been a comparative breeze; however, life decisions have a habit of delaying projects. In early 1994 John opted to relocate to Charlotte, North Carolina. Over the course of the next 14 years, little to no work was accomplished on the Impala's restoration until, in January 2008, Joe decided it was time to move to his current Florida residence. In one regard, the prolonged interruption in progress inadvertently permitted the aftermarket industry to catch up to the needs of restorers on a global scale.

"When the Impala arrived at my place," John explains, "essentially all that was needed to be done was the top, and installing the interior and the rest of the trim, the latter having been restored years earlier. We obtained an interior upholstery kit from Ciadella Interiors and a top from Wilgrove Upholstery in nearby Mint Hill, North Carolina, and set about finishing it all up by attaching the remaining trim, including several NOS parts, like the wheel covers, gas door guard and even the bumper guards."

In October 2011, Joe arrived with his trailer and took the finished Chevrolet to Melbourne, Florida, where he's been enjoying it ever since. 🏠



1955 Lincoln



Wherever you travel – half the fun is getting there in a Lincoln

Wherever you travel – wherever you sport – Lincoln performance can add immeasurably to your pleasure. Only Lincoln among all fine cars gives you the unmatched combination of new Turbo-Drive transmission, new high-torque engine and ball-joint front suspension. Another new Turbo-Drive and new high-torque V-8 engine are a matched team, designed and built to work together. With no jerk, no lag, you get an uninterrupted sweep of power from zero to super-highway limits. Here is power you can use – anywhere, under all driving conditions. Here is a transmission that gives you unparalleled

ease and convenience – smoothness with no sacrifice in performance.

Another great experience you enjoy in Lincoln is its road "hugability." Your Lincoln rides as if it were fastened to the road, even on the sharpest curves. Technically, new improved ball-joint front wheel suspension is responsible for this.

But why not let Lincoln, itself, tell you the complete story? A visit to your Lincoln Dealer will tell you more than words could do. Let Lincoln beauty speak to you in the showroom. Let Lincoln power speak to you on the road when you test drive it. Once you

do, we believe you'll feel Lincoln is something you've promised yourself for a long, long time. And it's a promise you'll want to keep – as soon as possible.

One of the top ten biggest attractions in the country is the Ford Museum in Dearborn, Michigan. Why not plan to visit it on your vacation? It's filled with fascinating displays and exhibits. LINCOLN DEARBORN • FORD MUSEUM

LINCOLN

for modern living
for magnificent driving

FOR MODERN LIVING, FOR MAGNIFICENT DRIVING

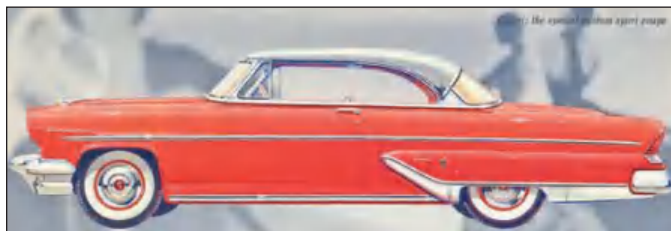
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Wherever you travel – whatever your sport – Lincoln performance can add immeasurably to your pleasure. Only Lincoln among all fine cars gives you the unmatched combination of new Turbo-Drive transmission, new high-torque engine and ball-joint front suspension.

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Capri: the special custom four-door sedan

The Orbiting Eagle

LOS ANGELES MANUFACTURER

Walter Macomber first introduced a vehicle to the public in 1914 in the form of a cyclecar named the Eagle. When the cycle car bubble burst shortly thereafter, Macomber moved his operations east to Sandusky, Ohio, and increased the size of his car. The main piece shared between the Eagle cycle car and the new Eagle-Macomber light car was the Macomber-designed powerplant, a five-cylinder, air-cooled, rotary engine that looked more like the bullet chambers of a revolver than any other rotary engine used in the automobile or aviation world at that time.

While the new Eagle-Macomber launched in 1916, it didn't do so with much success. Between 1916 and 1917 only nine cars in two- and three-person guise were produced. They rode on a 108-inch wheelbase with a rotary engine featuring a 3¾-inch bore with a 5-inch stroke producing 28 horsepower. By 1918, the Eagle-Macomber was stretched again, this time to 118 inches, and offered only in a five-passenger touring or sedan. The 1918 models cost \$1,500 and \$1,800, respectively—a huge increase over the \$700 1916-'17 models.

The sales catalog for the 1918 Eagle measures 8½ x 11 inches and contains just eight pages. The cover, in black, purple and green ink, shows an Eagle touring car with a background of planets and outer space. The illustration of planets is surely intended to be symbolic of the rotary engine's continuous "orbit" during operation.

Just as the air-cooled rotary engine was the heart of the car, it was also the heart of this sales catalog. The first page states that the catalog "will attempt to explain the workings of the Macomber motor in as simple a way as possible," and it does so on the second page with a wonderful illustration of a hand-sized model and descriptions. Here we see that pistons are connected to an angle plate that is bolted to a gear that meshes with another gear mounted on a shaft running through the center of the angle plate and cylinder cluster.

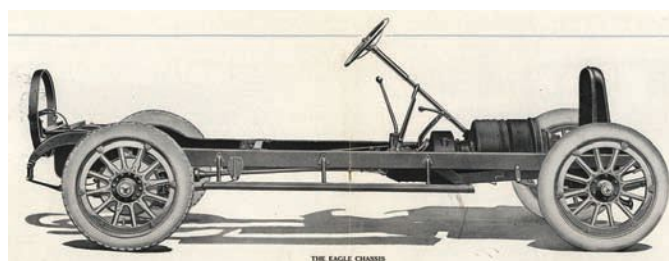
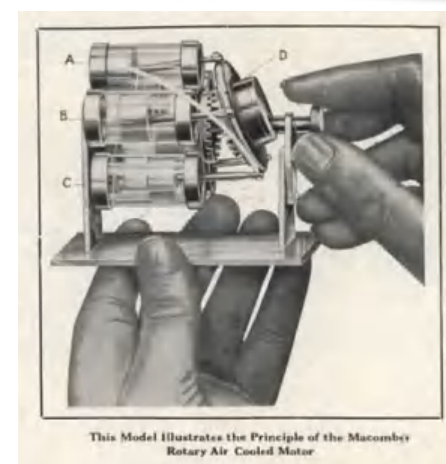
With regard to the operation of this rotary engine, the catalog states, "The only difficult part for the average man to understand is how pushing on the angle

plate can revolve it." A description making reference to water flowing on an angled waterwheel then follows, and we average men learn that the simple physics of a succession of cylinder explosions creates a rotational force. Still confused? So was I.

The Eagle-Macomber Motor Car Company believed that this rotary engine was superior to other rotary designs since it created no centrifugal forces and was smooth, balanced and vibration-free. Vibration, according to this catalog, is the key reason a vehicle depreciates in value, since it "weakens steel," "loosens bolts and adjustments" and is responsible for "a very large percentage of all automobile troubles." To illustrate the Macomber rotary's vibration-free operation, the catalog includes an overexposed picture of the engine running where we see blur and distortion only where there are moving parts. The catalog lists other benefits of the Macomber design, including fewer parts, better fuel economy and "a motor that is instantly accessible" and "so simple anyone with a fair mechanical knowledge can attend to all the repairs."

Practically in passing, the catalog mentions other key parts of the Eagle-Macomber car, including rear-wheel brakes, and a selective-type transmission with 10-inch clutch and semi-elliptic spring suspension on the front and rear axle. Standard colors for the 1918 Eagle-Macomber were "Brewster green and Arabian gray with white wheels. Optional colors extra."

Unfortunately for Macomber and every other Eagle stock holder, the enlarged 1918 model did not sell any better than previous models. In fact, only four were produced in that last year of Eagle-Macomber production. A few later studies of the Eagle-Macomber company believed Walter Macomber was more interested in selling his engine than cars. This catalog may be evidence of exactly that. Perhaps if the sales catalog dedicated more space to selling the car instead of the engine, the company would have been more successful. We'll never know. ☞



Give LaFayette a Look



WHILE FINDING UNDERDOGS FROM the 1970s and 1980s is easy, finding them from the 1950s and 1960s can prove more of a challenge, so one would think discovering one from the 1930s would be nearly impossible. Underdogs exist in every decade; you just need to adjust your parameters.

If you are in the market for an inexpensive car from the 1980s, you can set your upper limit at \$4,000 and consider any of a dozen or so models. Going back a few decades to the 1950s, you need to set your upper limit to around \$7,500, and again, there are plenty of bargains available, especially when you consider four-door family sedans.

What if you are a fan of cars from the 1930s, as I am? No problem. Stop searching for the usual suspects and consider some of the companion makes that popped up during the Great Depression. Your upper limit may hit \$9,000 or \$10,000, but I'll bet with patience and determination, you can get a nice ride needing very little work for under \$8,000. You will just have to get used to people asking, "What is it?" and "Who made that?" That's half the fun of owning an underdog.

Take the LaFayette for example, a lower-priced companion make offered by Nash. Here's a very brief history. In 1921, Charles Nash, president of Nash Motors, became president of LaFayette. For a short time, the two companies, LaFayette in Indianapolis and Nash in Kenosha,

operated separately. In 1922, LaFayette moved to Milwaukee and in 1924 became a subsidiary of Nash. The LaFayettes—big, luxurious V-8s—were discontinued by the end of the decade.

In 1934, Nash reintroduced the LaFayette as a less expensive companion make on a 113-inch wheelbase. Power was provided by a Nash 217.8-cu.in. L-head straight-six developing 75 to 83 horsepower. LaFayettes featured an all-steel sedan body, and in 1936, a Victoria was introduced. Sales were good: 12,700 cars in 1934, 9,300 in 1935, and 14,000 in 1936. In terms of overall Nash production

share, first year sales accounted for 44 percent, but the higher volume 1936 sales accounted for only 25 percent.

Nashes at the beginning of the decade were more conservative than many of their competitors, but that was all changed in 1935 when Nash introduced "Aeroform" styling, featuring fastback or notchback bodies with skirted fenders, louvered hoods, vee'd grilles, and all-steel, artillery-type wheels. LaFayettes were also treated to the modern styling as well as the bed-in-a-car feature pioneered by Nash.

In 1937, the low-priced Nash 400 was dropped and replaced with the newly-





named Nash LaFayette, equipped with a 90hp 234.8-cu.in. six-cylinder. Nash Sixes had sturdy, seven-main-bearing engines with a fine reputation.

After the bad recession year of 1938, a 1939 restyle couldn't come soon enough. The front end was smooth and integrated with flush-mounted headlamps flanking a narrow, tall grille. The following year, 1940, would mark the end of the Nash LaFayette, when its engine produced 99hp with few styling updates.

Can you find one? The simple answer is, yes.

While researching the LaFayette, I learned a few things. First, don't search for LaFayette as a separate make. Like Continental Mark IIs and most Imperials, LaFayettes suffer from an identity crisis. Regardless of model year, search for Nash LaFayette.

Another interesting dilemma with the LaFayette was one I didn't expect. I am used to Willys Americars of the late 1940s going for enormous sums of money even before they are customized, but I didn't expect to find several customized LaFayettes approaching \$60,000. An underdog junkie isn't looking for one of those. However, of all the Depression-era cars, I found more LaFayettes in original condition than just about any other make or model. My theory with an underdog like a LaFayette is that one either customizes it, leaves it alone, or ignores it altogether.

For example, I found a decent, all-original four-door, 1938 trunk-back sedan for less than \$8,500. This Nash LaFayette needed nothing cosmetically, and, according to the owner, was weekend and parade ready. I found a very nice 1936 LaFayette four-door fastback that had been sitting in a barn—a real barn find. While there was a fair share of surface rust, it was a complete, running car with an intact interior, solid floors and good glass. The owner wanted only \$3,500 for it. Slap on four new tires and drive on down to the next cruise-in. There were several more like these two in the same price range.

Many cars from the 1930s were sold for scrap during World War II or driven so much during the war that they ended up in a junkyard, so finding one on your list may be difficult or out of reach. Widen your search and consider a companion make, and you just might find the bargain of a lifetime in a LaFayette or Nash LaFayette. ☺

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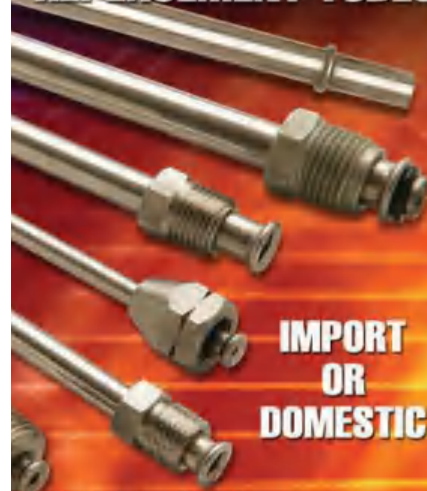
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Jim Bell

JIM BELL WASN'T A BAD DRAG

racer, but he couldn't hold a candle to Len "Pop" Kennedy.

Bell, originally from Illinois, had moved out to California in 1954, at the age of 16, to attend college and study engineering, first at Mount San Antonio and then later at California Polytechnic. Drag racing, however, fascinated him. He raced Plymouths fitted with Chrysler flathead six-cylinder engines and, every chance he had, he made his way down to the drag strips. There, he eventually ran across Kennedy.

"Here was a guy racing Buicks and leaving everybody on the line," Bell said. "So one day, I asked him to take me for a ride in one of his cars, telling him I was an engineering student doing a research project."

On that ride, Kennedy explained to Bell the benefits of Dynaflow transmissions and of the switch-pitch torque converter. Bell, in turn, offered to help tune Kennedy's cars, thus forming a partnership that would last for years.

"But I asked Pop, 'You're doing more than just using a switch-pitch, right?' and he said, sure, he had some gears in it," Bell said. He later found out Kennedy had more than just gears up his sleeve.

"This one night we were at San Gabriel, testing our reflexes on this little machine against Butch Leal and Don Nicholson," Bell recalled. "Pop was 60-something years old then, and it was then that I realized that old man had the best reflexes I've ever seen."

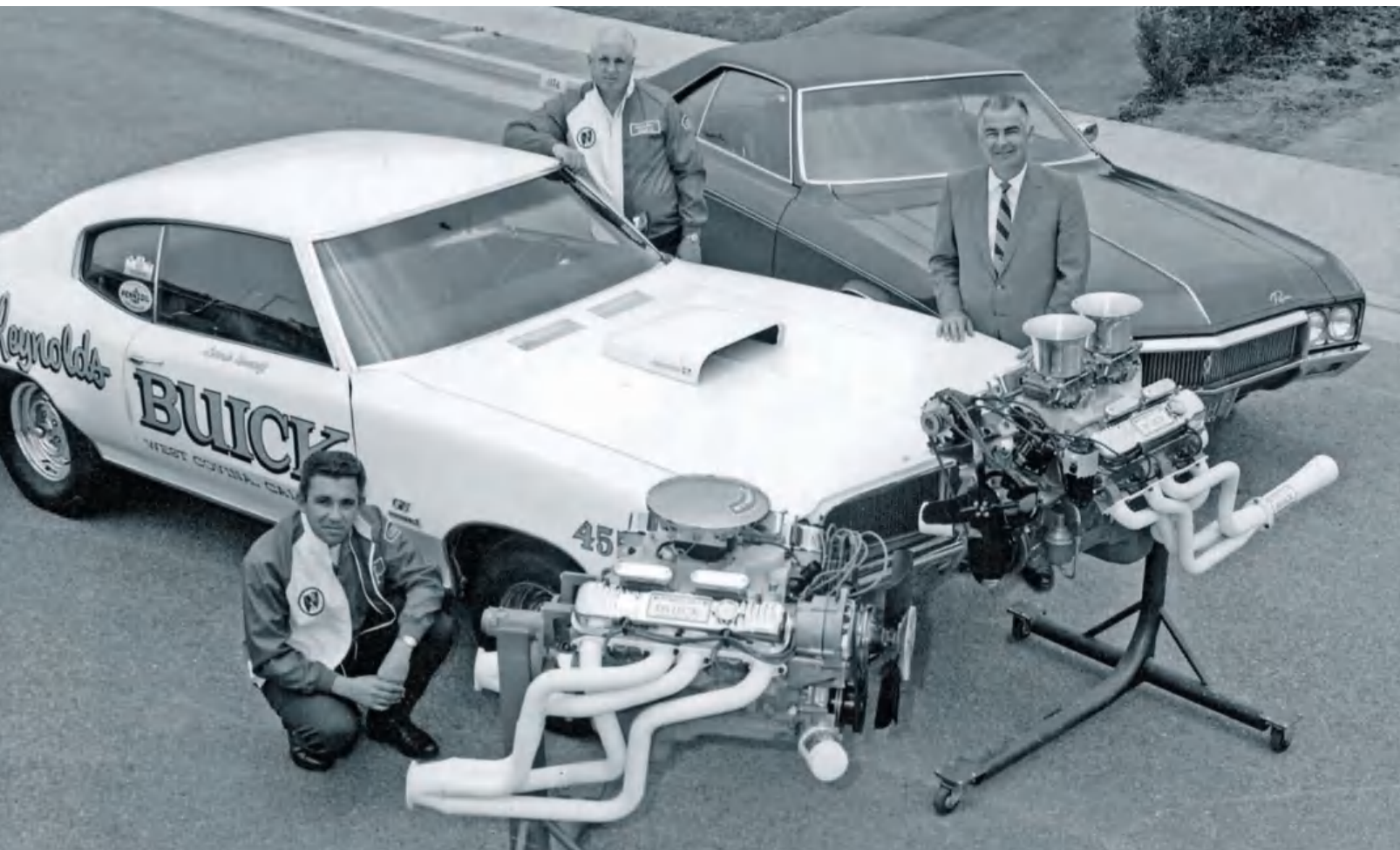
From then on, Bell told Kennedy to man the wheel of their race cars; Bell

would stick to tuning the cars. While racing would consume enough of Bell's time to prompt him to leave school before he could finish ("I thought then that I was gonna be the greatest race engine builder ever," Bell said), he took a job with a sprinkler company, designing irrigation systems for golf courses.

"I figured that company would let me go eventually, so I got something started on the side, selling and designing race parts out of my garage," Bell said.

Instead, the job with the sprinkler company lasted three decades, providing Bell with marketing, sales experience and funding, in part, for Kennedy and Bell's side business, Kenne Bell.

"Pop had something like 500 letters from guys all over the country asking his advice, so in about 1968, I wrote back to



all of them and convinced 488 of them to send us a buck for a parts catalog," Bell said. "We gave them all first shot at our used parts, and I went over to Mickey Thompson and bought all of his Buick headers for our catalog."

As the business expanded, Kenne Bell's relationship with Buick deepened. Through Reynolds Buick in West Covina, California, Buick supplied Kennedy and Bell with cars, often just to see what the two could do with them.

"In 1970, they sent us the first Stage 2 heads and asked us for a proposal on how to build a street-legal drag car with them," Bell said. "So we put a cam in it, put on the Stage 2 hood, installed 4.30 gears and headers and did a 10.73 with it. We sent it back to Buick and told them, 'Here's the first factory 10-second car,' and they got all hot for it, but then the unleaded fuel thing came, and they got scared off."


Eventually Kennedy left the business to Bell, who continued to develop Buick V-8 performance parts on his own.

"I did it all out of my garage—no dyno," he said. "But I lived next to Pomona, so I could go out there as soon as the strip opened and make 12 runs before anybody else could get in line. I had a cable setup to change timing one degree at a time, and I had a setup that allowed me to change jets on the carburetor in five minutes. That was my dyno."

Bell expanded the business in the late 1970s to accommodate Buick's renewed interest in its V-6 and even worked with Buick to build a V-6-powered dune buggy to help reintroduce the engine. As Buick V-6 mania grew in the 1980s, Kenne Bell was the first to push a Turbo Buick 231 into the 11s, 10s, 9s and 7s. That part of the business continued up until 10 or 11 years ago, but in about 1990, Bell noticed a shift in the hobby and again adapted his business to meet a growing demand.

"All of these cars, the Grand Nationals and GNXs, were going into bags to be preserved. That's why I started to get into Mustangs—people don't put 'em into bags because there's too many of them and they're not worth anything, so everybody races 'em."

Thus, that year Kenne Bell introduced its first twin-screw supercharger kit for contemporary Mustangs. Since then, through partnerships with Art Whipple and with Autorotor and Lysholm in Sweden, Kenne Bell has expanded its offerings of supercharger kits to cover all the modern muscle cars.

Though Kennedy has since passed, Bell remains active with the company, helping to develop new superchargers and new applications for them. 

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Dick Osgood

Dynamometer Technician

General Motors Tech Center, 1954-1955

DURING THE SUMMERS OF 1954

and 1955 while studying mechanical engineering in undergraduate school, I worked at the General Motors Technical Center on the outskirts of Warren, Michigan. At the time, I lived in Royal Oak, which was close by.

The Tech Center was a research facility for all GM brands and was where all aspects of automobile design were tested, including engines. There were about 10 dynamometer labs, five on each side of a long hallway with windows looking out onto the test track. My job as a dynamometer tech was working on Buick V-8 engine development. At the same time, other GM divisions were testing their engines in additional dynamometer lab rooms.

The Buick engines were delivered by forklift and put into place by roller cranes. There was a basement below into which the engines' exhaust was directed, and then blown up high outdoors. The dynamometer, which had an electric motor that produced 400 horsepower, was mounted on fine rotational needle bearings on each end so it could be rotated by the torque of the engine hooked to it. Electric drag was applied by the motor to hold the engine at the set RPM. An arm sticking out of the motor was connected to a giant Toledo scale dial in order to measure torque of the engine.

We sat at a long control board measuring RPM, exhaust temperatures and fuel flow. Our testing was to get maximum power from the engines, which were set up with adjustable-height intake manifolds and adjustable-length exhaust headers. Engine speed was controlled by a tall control handle with a large, red, four-inch diameter emergency shut-off button in case the engine showed any drop off of scale measurement indicating imminent engine failure; sometimes they would blow up due to bearing failure. The major work for us was testing port fuel injection using new designs of flow nozzles on the ports fed by a rotary mechanical pump resembling another distributor.

Three engines blew up during those summers I worked there, with a lot of hot oil and engine parts spewed all over the place. The test procedure was to break in

the new engines, and then do power runs at every 200 RPM from 2,000 to 4,400 RPM, holding each speed for 10 minutes or so. All tests were done at full throttle. Sitting four feet away from the bright glowing headers was mighty scary!

The maximum power we were getting was 301hp at 4,000 RPM. We shut down many times to change intake and exhaust lengths for optimum power development. All failures were related to rod bearings. The "suits" would come in each Monday morning to check results and suggest changes.

There was also a great deal of carburetor testing going on next door. We tested various redesigns for power and smoothness; these tests showed why the so-called "nailhead" Buicks were not used in hopped-up applications. The old-timers used to say that a Cadillac or Oldsmobile engine could be put on and run all night with no failures.

Another perk was that our office windows looked out onto the test track where, every day, you would see the latest Firebirds (not Pontiac) going by, and other wild stuff like a 1955 Buick prototype with an adjustable wheelbase. There was no floor in the car, and jackscrews and slides were used to vary the position of the rear axle.

While working at the Tech Center, I visited the development area for the Corvettes. There were terrible problems with the 1953 Corvette bodies tearing loose from the frames at the hold-down bolts.

Other areas of interest were the two-story-tall suspension test rooms



where cars were brought in on the second story. Their frames were tied down and the front wheels placed on top of a giant flat wheel. The huge wheels were turned electrically to provide the simulation of a bumpy road to see how the suspension worked. It was fascinating to watch strobe lights showing the motions of the shocks and suspension members flexing and showing where more design work was needed. All these tests were done on GM's largest car models, in our case on the Buick Roadmasters. The designs would then be passed down to the lighter weight cars with little change.

Many show cars were put on display along the building's wide hallways. I really wanted one of those nice big Roadmaster convertibles, but because they were equipped with some non-standard parts, and the fact that GM could not support these cars for parts, they were usually sent to the crusher. There were other fascinating locations housing prototypes from the past, including the famous Y-Job Buick.

All of these experiences were of incalculable help in my engineering career of mechanical design. It made those equations and computations taught in school become real. 🌀



I Was There relates your stories from working for the carmakers, whether it was at the drawing board, on the assembly line or anywhere in between. To submit your stories, email us at editorial@hemmings.com or write to us at **I Was There**, c/o *Hemmings Classic Car*, 222 Main Street, Bennington, Vermont 05201.

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MODIFYING THE MIX

Q: What size carburetor do you recommend for a 240hp, 348-cu.in. Chevrolet engine? It currently has an Edelbrock 600 cfm carb on it, which is excellent, but I feel the engine runs a little rich. Do you think I can jet it down?

Tom Ellermann
San Rafael, California

A: A 600 cfm carburetor shouldn't be too much for your engine. If it's running rich, you can change jets and rods. Go to Edelbrock's tech center at www.edelbrock.com and look up the manual for your carburetor. In there, you'll find suggested setups along with part numbers for their carburetor calibration kits, which are available through auto parts stores that sell these carburetors. Edelbrock also has videos on its website that address a variety of carburetor-related topics. The one you might want to check out is "Installation: Additional Tuning." If you need further help, Edelbrock also has a tech line: 800-416-8628.

HOT SETUP FOR HORSEPOWER

Q: I've had an overheating problem with my 1972 413-cu.in. engine. It came out of a motor home with 42,000 miles on it. I had the engine bored to approximately 426 cubic inches and all-new parts installed, mostly for a 440, including aluminum cylinder heads, intake and headers. It dynos at 445hp.

The problem is, when I drive in traffic, it will overheat. I've changed water pumps, fan blades and thermostats, and installed a new stock radiator. Then I installed a new aluminum radiator with dual fans and changed the coolant to a waterless type. I then had an aluminum radiator built with almost twice the capacity, but it still runs hot in town, in traffic, even with the air conditioning off. On the road with the air conditioning on, it runs at about 180-190 degrees. I changed gauges, but it still reads the same. This engine is in a 1986 Dodge pickup that I bought new, but I wasn't too happy with the 360-cu.in. V-8 that it came with.

Bill Dame
Madisonville, Kentucky

A: You didn't mention whether or not you are running a fan shroud. If you aren't, you need one. You also didn't mention

what thermostat you're using, but if it's a 180, you could try moving up to a 195-degree thermostat. This would keep the coolant in the radiator a little longer and allow the radiator to do its job.

That said, the problem sounds like a timing issue. Retarded timing, combined with a rich mixture at idle, could cause your engine to run very hot. I assume you're using a distributor with a vacuum advance, so, first, make sure it's connected to a manifold vacuum source or at the base of the carburetor so you're getting full vacuum at idle.

Next, I'd wonder if the camshaft you're using is making adequate vacuum to open the advance when driving around town. If you're using a stock-type canister with a lumpy camshaft, the vacuum advance might not be working. You could fix this by switching to an advance canister that opens with less vacuum. One way to test this theory would be to temporarily set the initial advance a little higher by turning the distributor and seeing if it makes the engine run cooler at low RPM.

With a modified engine, it can be tricky to dial in timing, but perhaps start somewhere between 10-15 degrees initial and shoot for 36-38 degrees total. It wouldn't be a bad idea to double check that your timing marks correspond with TDC, either. Check your carburetor float level, too, just to make sure you're not letting in more fuel than the engine needs at low speeds.

WIPER PARTS PUZZLE

Q: I have been working on 1959 and '60 Chevrolets for 30-plus years and acquired and parted out over 20 Biscaynes, Bel Airs, Impalas, station wagons and El Caminos. I've restored two 1959s and I'm working on a third. But something has me puzzled: Why are there two different windshield wiper transmission assemblies for the right side? One design is very simple, with two pivot points; the other is much more complicated, with five pivot points and a scissor-type action. Whether it's a single-speed or two-speed doesn't seem to matter. The designs are all mix-and-match, with no rhyme or reason.

John Gore
Edinburgh, Indiana

A: There are actually four different linkage/transmission setups for those cars. The post sedans, the station wagon and El Camino share single- and two-speed wiper mechanisms, while the "sport models" —

convertibles, sport coupes and four-door hardtops — have their own single- and two-speed wiper mechanisms — all of which have different part numbers for the right and left side transmissions.


I suspect the different wiper drives were to compensate for the different windshields in these cars: The windshield used on the sport models is two inches shorter than all the rest, and the angle is slightly different. If in doubt, get an interchange guide or a parts book and match the transmission part numbers with the car and wiper motor type you're using. By the way, there are different arms, as well, for single-speed and two-speed wipers.

SAGGING SEAT BELT SOLUTIONS

Q: Here's a problem that has bedeviled me for years, both with collector cars and daily drivers. By the time a car becomes well broken-in, the seat belt retractor, especially on the driver's door, loses its snap and either fails to retract or retracts so slowly that the seat belt gets caught in the door while closing it. Usually feeding the belt back into the retractor by hand works, but it's a real pain. I have tried pulling the belt all the way out, cleaning it, and spraying it and the retractor assembly with dry silicone lubricant, but this only makes things better temporarily. Short of finding NOS seat belt assemblies for every vehicle I have ever owned, do you know of a fix for this?

Lou Pane
Point Pleasant, New Jersey

A: If thoroughly cleaning the belt and the guide where the belt enters the retractor as well as the retractor assembly doesn't solve the problem, then I'd replace the retractor. Newer cars, by the way, have an explosive charge in the pretensioners, activated in the event of a collision, so those you might not want to mess around with. Just go to the dealer. For old cars, there are a lot of options: For new seat belt parts, try Juliano's at www.seatbeltstore.com or Andover Restraints www.andoverrestraints.com. For seatbelt restoration: Sharon's Web at www.sharonswebinc.com or Snake-Oyl at www.ssnake-oyl.com.

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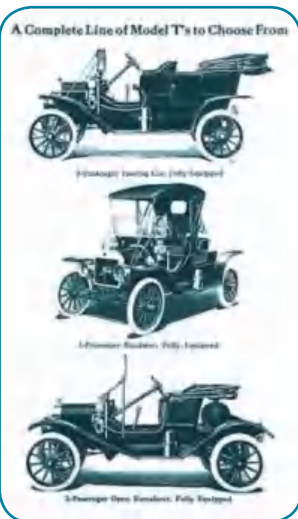
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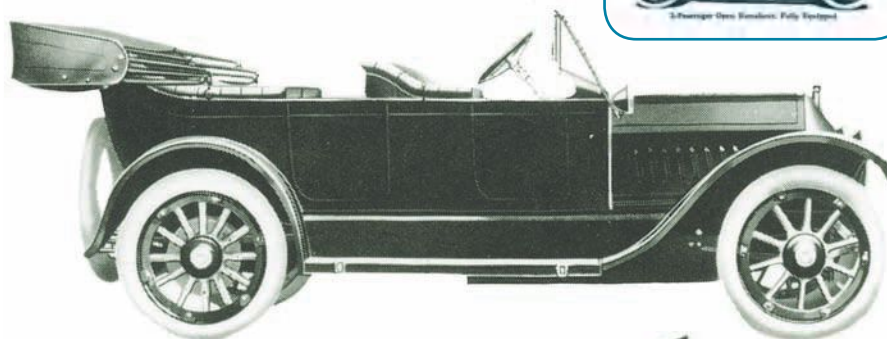
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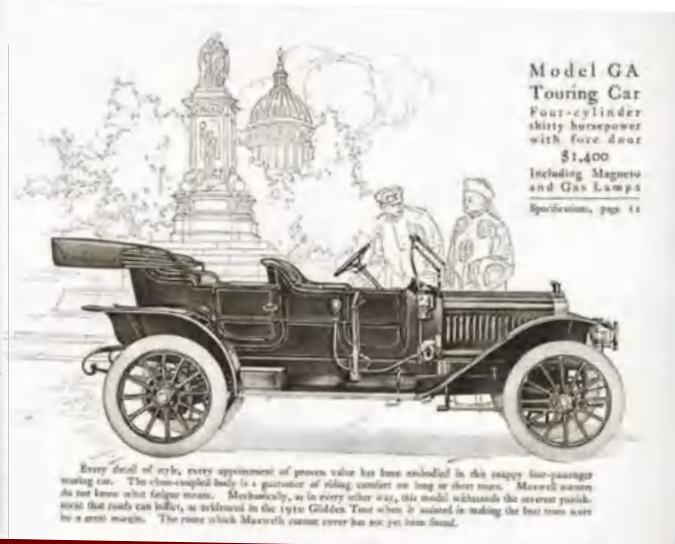
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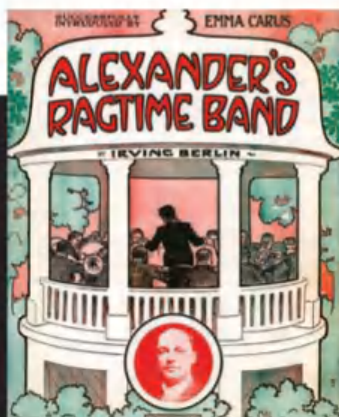
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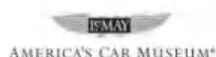
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The Gray Ghost



THERE CAME A TIME IN THE LIFE OF

every young man, at least in the 1950s, when he realizes that a bicycle just wouldn't cut it with the ladies. Even a super-cool middle-weight, red-and-cream Columbia. At one time, I was enthralled with that beautiful bike on the pedestal in the Goodyear store showroom. I was able to buy it and kept it like new, parking it next to my bed every night. But now I was 14, and wanted four wheels.

In Texas, in the 1950s, you could get your driver's license at 14 by taking driver's training, so in the summer of 1957, I rode my Columbia all the way across town three times a week to take the course at Beaumont High School. We drove a brand-new 1957 Ford.

I passed my test, got my license and started a car search. Having traded my bike to a neighbor for a gas range for my mom, I was ready to drive. My dad had an auto-electric repair shop that I worked in, so he found me a car for \$150 that I was supposed to work for.

It was a 1941 Cadillac Series 75, a seven-passenger limousine with the two "pull-out" seats. It wasn't the normal idea of a teen car, like a 1934 Ford coupe or '49 Mercury, but it was mine. I was thrilled to have wheels. While the baby-blue exterior had a few small dents, the chrome trim was in good shape, and DuPont Chrome Polish made it look like

new. The interior was in fine condition, with real wood paneling, five courtesy lamps, three gloveboxes and two clocks.

When I removed the front clock to refinish the instrument panel, I saw that on the back of the panel was written in grease pencil, "The Texas Company." I surmised that the original owner must have been Texaco. Surely, the nearby Port Arthur refinery wouldn't have bought a used Cadillac. So I began my research. My limo was rare, with fewer than 2,000 built. Its 150hp flathead V-8 was used in pairs to power Sherman tanks in WWII, and it was a favorite in 1940s-era movies like *Harvey*.

I got to work "restoring" my Cadillac, now more excited than ever about owning a special car. Nobody I knew had anything like it. A friend helped me paint it with gray primer with the intention of finishing it in black lacquer. Well, I never got that far; too expensive. But I named it the *Gray Ghost* after the TV show of that title.

My buddies and I had a plan that, once we painted the Cadillac black, we would stage a Chicago gangster abduction in front of the Jefferson Theater in downtown Beaumont. *The Untouchables* was a hit show at that time. Did I mention that we were young teens with a car and without yet having developed that part of the brain concerned with good judgment?

Most of our adventures were of the

normal type. Cruising the Pig Stands at night, driving over the Rainbow Bridge at Bridge City in the moonlight, with the headlamps off, and going to the Rainbo Bakery at midnight for a fresh out-of-the-oven loaf of bread. We would add a stick of butter and sit on the Cadillac's fenders, enjoying it with a cherry Coke. However, all that night cruising ran down the battery, so my dad told me how to upgrade the generator. I rewound the armature so that it put out 15 amps idling!

Driving the old Cadillac to school, I would pick up several kids along the way and they were supposed to pitch in, since the car got only about eight miles per gallon. One kid never came up with the 50-cent fee, so one morning I pulled over and had him ejected. One unusually cold morning after spending the night with a friend, I took him on his paper route. Probably the only time a newspaper was ever delivered by a limo. And taking my sister to school, she made me drop her off a block from the school. She didn't want to be seen in a hearse; I never convinced her of the difference.

The *Gray Ghost* was fun, and all of us who grew up in that wonderful era can relate to the common experiences of trying to get those cars to start, to keep them running and, more importantly, to get them to stop. My Cadillac finally did stop for good, for lack of funds to get the 5,000-pound car re-registered.

When I met the red-headed love of my life, I sold the *Gray Ghost* for \$20 to buy her a fake fur coat for Christmas. I still have her, yet my first car lives on only in my *Moments to Remember* series of paintings that I began in 1983. The Cadillac makes a cameo appearance in each of the 15 scenes, like Hitchcock did in his films. 🐾



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LUNCH:
Town Square, Vacaville, CA - 11:45 a.m.

OVERNIGHT:
Old Sacramento, Sacramento, CA - 5:15 p.m.

SUNDAY, JUNE 19, 2016

LUNCH:
Heritage Park, Gardnerville, NV - 12:30 p.m.

OVERNIGHT:
National Automobile Museum, Reno, NV - 4:15 p.m.

MONDAY, JUNE 20, 2016

LUNCH:
Historic Lincoln Highway, Austin, NV - 11:45 a.m.

OVERNIGHT:
College Avenue, Elko, NV - 5:30 p.m.

TUESDAY, JUNE 21, 2016

LUNCH:
Bonneville Salt Flats, Wendover, UT - 10:00 a.m.

OVERNIGHT:
Roundhouse, Evanston, WY - 5:15 p.m.

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 22, 2016

LUNCH:
The Depot, Rawlins, WY - 11:50 a.m.

OVERNIGHT:
Cheyenne Depot Museum, Cheyenne, WY - 5:15 p.m.

THURSDAY, JUNE 23, 2016

LUNCH:
Fairgrounds, Lusk, WY - 11:15 a.m.

OVERNIGHT:
Saint Joseph Street, Rapid City, SD - 5:15 p.m.

FRIDAY, JUNE 24, 2016

LUNCH:
Main Street, Chamberlain, SD - 1:30 p.m.

OVERNIGHT:
Phillips Avenue, Sioux Falls, SD - 5:30 p.m.

SATURDAY, JUNE 25, 2016

LUNCH:
East Park, Mason City, IA - 12:30 p.m.

OVERNIGHT:
Third Avenue Bridge, Cedar Rapids, IA - 5:15 p.m.

SUNDAY, JUNE 26, 2016

LUNCH:
Iowa 80 Trucking Museum, Walcott, IA - 11:30 a.m.

FINISH:
John Deere Pavilion, Moline, IL - 2:00 p.m.

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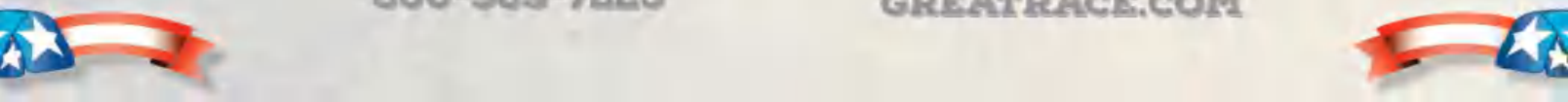
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Last Graham Standing

The 1929 Model BE represents the final run of its kind



BY MIKE McNESSOR • PHOTOGRAPHY BY JEFF KOCH

When Walter P. Chrysler added Dodge to the Chrysler portfolio in 1928, he had no idea how important that move would be to the future of his company.

In recent years, Ram's rugged haulers helped lead Chrysler out of its 2009 bankruptcy, boasting the kind of month-over-month sales increases that might have saved scuttled Pentastar marques like Imperial, De Soto, Eagle and Plymouth.

Looking back a little further, you could credit another deal that laid the foundation for today's Ram: The Octo-

ber 1924 agreement between the Dodge Brothers and the Graham Brothers that made Graham a division of Dodge.

Graham became a player in the turn-of-the-20th century commercial vehicle business starting in 1919 with its ingenious "Truck Builder"—a conversion service that made passenger cars into trucks.

Truck Builder was devised as a way

for car dealers to increase business while thinning their used car inventories. A dealer would sell a customer on the idea of converting an old car into a truck, then the car would be driven to a Graham Truck Builder Distributing and Assembling Depot where the passenger car body was removed from the chassis. Typically, a Torbensen heavy-duty differential

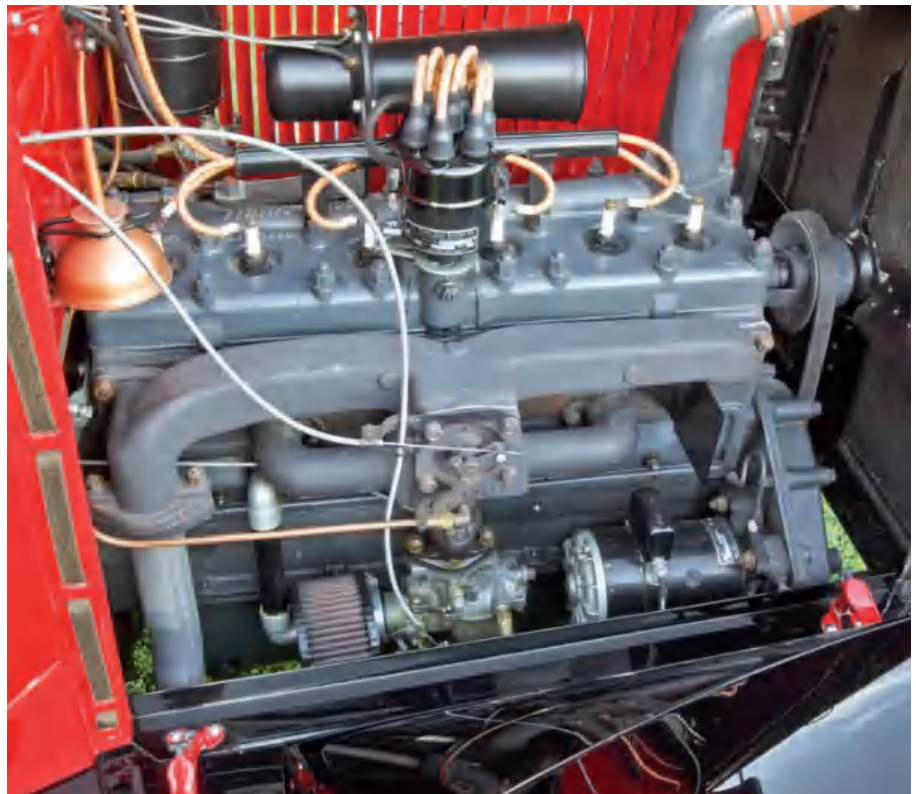


The optional Warner Hi-Flex four-speed takes a little getting used to, as first and third are at the bottom of the pattern, while second and fourth are at the top. Powering this Graham is a 208-cu.in. Dodge six-cylinder.

was installed, a wooden cab without doors was put on and a cargo body was mounted. In some cases, Graham might simply cut off the car chassis aft of the engine and graft on heavy-duty frame rails and a rear axle. Then they'd top the new "truck" with a Graham cab and body, typically made out of wood.

The Graham depot would carry the complete line of available Graham cargo bodies in stock and performed all of the conversion work, while new-car dealers would receive commissions for bringing customers to Graham.

In 1920, Graham graduated from modifying passenger cars to building its own trucks using vendor-supplied drivetrains and components. Graham supplied the cab, bodies and frame rails, then purchased suspension and drivetrain components from outside companies: Torbensen for the front and rear axles and four-cylinder engines from Continental, for instance. The new Graham truck was named Speed Truck and had a 1½-ton payload capacity.



One of the variants was the 18-passenger Speed Bus: a wood-paneled passenger bus body (from the firewall back) built on a 1½-ton Graham Speed Truck Chassis.

In 1921, Dodge partnered with Graham in a bid to expand Dodge's limited commercial offerings. The Graham brothers signed on with Dodge to use Dodge drivetrains, chassis and even body parts, adding their unique cabs and bodies. The chassis and some of the unique parts for these trucks were designed by Graham and built by Dodge; then the trucks were assembled at Graham's plants. The finished 1- and 1½-ton trucks were then sold as Grahams through Dodge's dealers, alongside Dodge's own commercial cars.

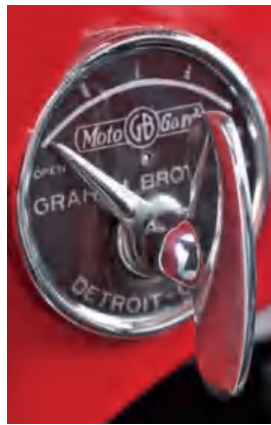
The lines between Dodge and Graham began to blur even more in late

1924 when Graham became a division of Dodge and Robert Graham was named director of the company's Commercial Car and Truck Division. Graham's 1- and 1½-ton trucks and buses were a sales success, and in 1926, it expanded the lineup to include a 2-ton truck with dual wheels. Hoping to capitalize further on Graham's name as a serious commercial truck,

in 1927, all Dodge trucks were built in Graham plants and sold as Grahams. This added a Dodge ¾-ton hauler to the Graham stable, which already included a pair of 1-ton models, as well as 1½-ton and 2-ton trucks and buses.

In 1928, a ½-ton truck based on a Dodge car, with a 108-inch wheelbase, was tossed into the mix, giving Graham a repertoire of more than a dozen models ranging from light-duty all the way up to a 3-ton carrying capacity. However, the Graham name would disappear from trucks as quickly as it appeared following Chrysler's \$170 million acquisition of Dodge on July 30, 1928. In January of 1929, all of the trucks and buses that had formerly been Grahams were built with Dodge badges. Meanwhile the Graham





This Graham's minimal instruments were restored by a specialist, but the owner did all of the heavy lifting on this extensive project, working from a pile of parts and two donor trucks. All of the wood pieces were reproduced in oak, and the truck was finished in two-stage urethane.



brothers, who hadn't been involved in the company since 1927, had acquired Paige Detroit and were building Graham-Paige automobiles.

This month's feature truck is one of the last of the Grahams—a 1929 model BE 1¼-ton with a stake bed. It's the product of an extensive 14-plus-year restoration by its owners Michael and Berta French of Oakdale, California.

Michael bought the truck in 1998 for \$100, as an incomplete project that someone had begun years earlier. "It took me three trailer loads to get it all home," he said. "It was a jigsaw puzzle. They had even taken the leaf springs apart. Someone years before had done a pencil sketch of what the truck looked like all together and, at first, that was all I had to go on."

Michael later purchased two other Graham trucks, one he found in Nebraska and another in Colorado, both of which served as parts donors and as rolling reference guides during the restoration of his 1929 Model BE. From one truck, among other things, he sourced a good 208-cu.in. L-head six-cylinder core engine that he sent off to Taylor Automotive in Modesto for machining and a rebuild. The other truck had an original-style stake bed that was heavily deteriorated, but could help serve as a guide for the new one Michael would scratch build. All of the wood portions of the cab—the floorpan, the roof bows and more—were also custom

made from oak. "There was a lot of winging it with the cab, working from original photographs," Michael said. "A friend of mine has a cabinet shop at his house. We spent four full days building pieces and fitting things together."

The truck's running boards, too, were fabricated by a sheetmetal shop using an original set of running boards as patterns. The rear fenders had also gone missing, but, remarkably, an online wanted ad turned up a set nearby. "My wife one day suggested that I put an ad on Craigslist seeking Graham Brothers truck parts," Michael said. "Lo and behold, a guy emailed me and said he had three rear fenders, two front fenders and a hood. I bought everything for \$200."

With the Graham's body in shape, Michael applied Imron Elite urethane basecoat and clear to the cab, wheels and fenders—his first time painting an entire vehicle. Meanwhile, all of the brightwork

was sent out for chroming at Sherm's Custom Plating in Sacramento. The original pot metal radiator cap didn't retain its new chrome finish after being exposed to heat, so Michael turned out a reproduction unit on his lathe, in brass, and had it plated.

For all of their time and effort, the Frenches have won gold in two different classes at the 2013 and 2015 Ironstone Concours d'Elegance in Murphys, California. The Frenches drive their Graham frequently on old car tours and even take it on occasional pleasure trips to visit California wineries, so Michael installed a Watson three-speed auxiliary transmission behind the Warner Hi-Flex four-speed unit to boost the old delivery truck's road speed.

"Since I finished restoring the Graham in 2013, we've put about 4,000 miles on it," he said. "With the overdrive, it'll cruise at about 50 MPH. It's noisy, but the seat is very comfortable and it rides pretty nice." 🍷



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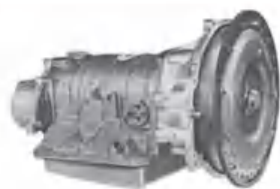
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Rugged Red Diamonds

The 1947-'49 International KB-series trucks proved a perfect fit for a postwar small business



BY DAVE CONWILL • PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY JOY SHERMAN

Henry J. Kaiser famously explained his business philosophy as “find a need and fill it.” That kind of plainspoken horse sense sums up the foundations of a lot of post-WWII small businesses. In the tumultuous times that came on the heels of V-J Day, it was good to be self-sufficient. Nobody was certain whether the prosperity of wartime

would continue with the influx of returning soldiers (it had not in 1918) or whether the economic doldrums of the 1930s would return.

“Find a need and fill it” certainly reflects the outlook of Reg Sherman Jr., an upstate New Yorker from the Lebanon Valley area who knew that he was done with the drudgery of farm work and wanted to be his own boss. At just 20 years old, Reg married, and along with his new wife, Joy, set forth to build a business based on his ability to drive a truck, his foresight and his sweat equity.

In late 1948, Reg and Joy sold their only car, a 1936 Dodge sedan, and purchased a new, or nearly new, Ford F-Series cab-over. Reg and a friend built a sturdy van body on the Ford chassis using corrugated metal, and Reg started in business taking milk cans from Lebanon Valley farmers to a creamery in Springfield, Massachusetts.

That cab-over would eventually be joined by another F-Series Ford and a Pilothouse Dodge, and Reg acquired a locally built Sampson backhoe. Soon he was excavating full-time, and the milk route was sold to another entrepreneur.



When the ground was too frozen to excavate, Reg found yet another need to fill—wood. The hard ground was perfect for skidding logs, and he soon put his bulldozers to work pulling felled trees out of area woodlots. Reg worked all the time, never resting on his laurels.

“He would rather work than play,” says Joy. “To him work was play.” When he wasn’t excavating or skidding logs, he was performing his own equipment maintenance or looking for the next opportunity. Excavation experience led to real-estate investing, with several gravel pits acquired starting in the 1950s, some of which are still producing today.

As business expanded in different directions, the company also started accumulating a small fleet of International Harvester KB-series heavy trucks. Finding that their power and durability suited his business model perfectly, Reg acquired used examples whenever they became available.

The KBs were International's immediate postwar offerings. Like many automakers, International simply did a light restyle on its prewar line, the K-series. The K-models were introduced for 1941 and featured more-conservative styling than the swoopy 1937-vintage M-series. Reg preferred KB-10s, with a 22,500- to 29,250-pound GVWR. The KB-6 and larger were set apart from their lighter-duty brethren in that they had neither the 1947-introduced extensions on the lower grille nor integrated headlamps. What sets a KB-10 apart from its 1941-'46 counterpart, the K-10, is its wider grille with a fancier top.

The KBs were in other respects little changed from the trucks that had powered American industry through World War Two. The KB-10 still featured the massive 140-horsepower, 310-lb.-in., 401-cu.in. Red Diamond OHV six-cylinder engine that would power gasoline-fueled Internationals up through the 1970s. The Red Diamond featured a forged crankshaft riding in seven main bearings and came coupled to a five-speed transmission with a top-gear over-drive (direct-drive was optional), putting power through a two-piece driveshaft to the buyer's choice of a spiral-bevel, two-speed or double-reduction rear axle with ratios from 6.5:1 to 9.23:1 available. The KB-10 came in the buyer's choice of four different wheelbases, from 149 to 197 inches.

Better still for Reg, the K- and KB-series trucks were enormously plentiful. Unlike many manufacturers, International had been permitted to continue civilian truck production right through WWII, resulting in many used examples and spares available. Further, International was late to the market with a true postwar truck and produced the KB through 1949—compare this with the 1947 introduction of the new Chevrolet and GMC trucks, and the 1948 introduction of the Ford F-Series. As a testament to their suitability for the small businessman, Reg had at least one of those KBs still in service in 1987, almost 40 years after International discontinued them in favor of the L-series.

Reg passed away in 2003, but Joy, who shared these photos and stories with us, still operates the remainder of the business that she and Reg built together over a half century. 🐾



We enjoy publishing period photos of authentic, old-time working trucks, especially from the people who drove them or owned them. If you have a story and photos to share, email the author at jdonnelly@hemmings.com.

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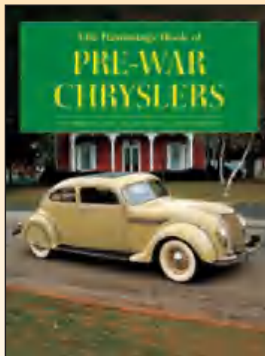
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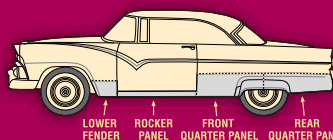


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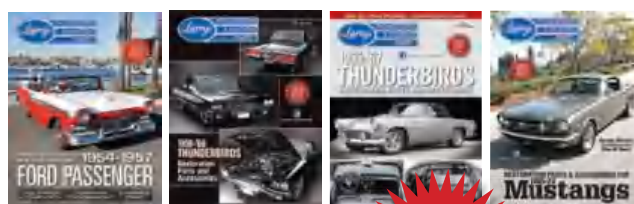


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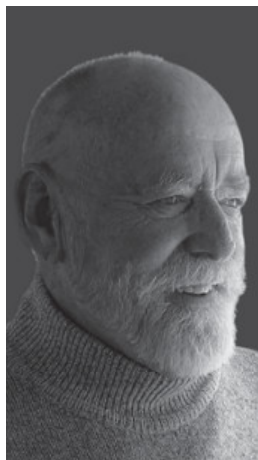
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with my fellow

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I've Been Searching . . .

Now and then you hit the jackpot at swap meets. I was wandering through the Pomona get-together in Southern California one Sunday a few years ago, and came across some items I had been seeking for a decade. My 1936 Packard 120 originally had a one-year-only windshield wiper assembly that had rods that went to eyes on the cowl and clips on the wiper blades to accommodate them. The arms also had special swivels that made it all work well. None were available at any price. I had been using blades from a 1937 model, but they were not right.

And then I came across a guy with old Trico parts. He just wanted to clear a little money out of them for schlepping them to the fairgrounds. He charged me 10 bucks for the whole assembly. I was thrilled! It made me realize that most parts are out there somewhere for just about any old car. I even spotted the tuning head for a Tucker car radio at a meet once. A vendor might have something like that for a long, long time, but if someone needed it . . .

If you are like me, you are constantly looking for parts. It is an old habit. I am not restoring anything right now, though I am helping my son with his 1936 Ford three-window, and re-furbishing my long-since-restored 1966 Morris Minor convertible. But even when I don't exactly need certain items, I am always on the lookout for them at swap meets, in the ads in *Hemmings Motor News* and on the Internet.

Spare headlamps are an example. My 1940 Packard takes six-volt sealed beams, but my 1939 Packard requires bulbs. And then my 1958 Chevrolet Apache pickup has the smaller, quad headlamps typical of that year. When I find such items, I grab them, because you never know when you might need them. That goes for taillamp lenses, too. The plastic ones on my 1966 Morris Minor are cracked and faded; try finding a set of those on this side of the Atlantic.

Tune-up kits are nice to come across, too. Such items are generally available, but if you can find them at a swap meet, chances are you will pay a lot less for them. Also, those tiny 10mm peanut spark plugs for the Packards are not available at your local auto parts store. Correct

original air filters are also a great treasure, because so many of them get replaced with cheesy-looking aftermarket types.

When I was in the middle of a restoration, I used to make sandwich boards out of a couple of pieces of foam-core board. They weren't big—about 18 x 24 inches. I used a felt tip pen to

write down what I was seeking, then put the boards around my neck and started walking through the swap meet. They worked well.

People would say, "There is one of those over on row E about halfway down on the right." Or: "I have one of those at home; here's my number." The sandwich boards looked



funny, but they worked. Turns out parts are out there for just about any production car built in the last 70 years—you have only to find them.

The Internet has been a great boon to restorers. I have found components for my Morris Minor in New Jersey and as far away as Australia, and parts for my Packards in Indiana and, of all places, Argentina.

I have received parts that were worn and unusable a few times, but not from the reputable dealers. The biggest challenge isn't with the quality or prices, but making sure you order the right components. The parts purveyor may know roughly how your car was equipped at the factory, but there are many exceptions to the rule, and car builders often switched components from one month to another.

Meanwhile, I keep searching. I am still looking for a spare five-bladed fan Chevrolet used in the '50s on its A/C cars. And because I have three cars with electric overdrives, I will snap up governor solenoids and lock-out cables when I find them.

Keep in mind that old car parts are money in the bank, despite what one's spouse might think. They don't make them anymore (the parts, not spouses) and restorers need them. And then there is the satisfaction you get when you can help a buddy out with something he needs to restore one of his cars.

For me, it doesn't get much better than a day at the swap meet, followed by a toothsome repast and libation at the local diner with my fellow car guys. ☞

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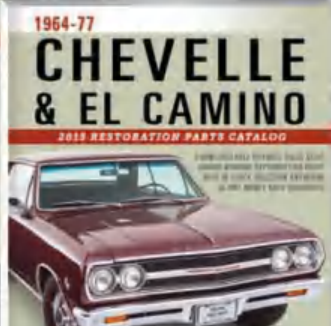
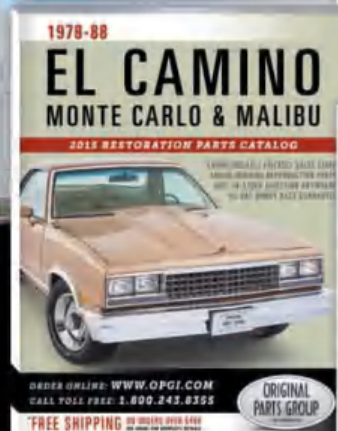
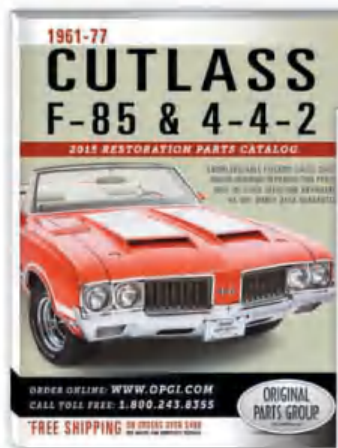
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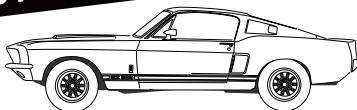
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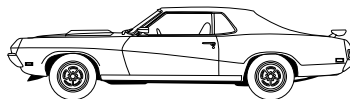
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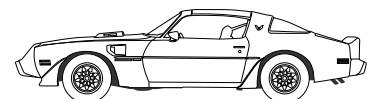
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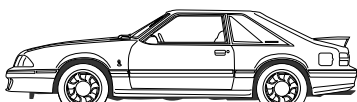
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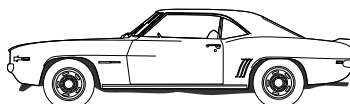
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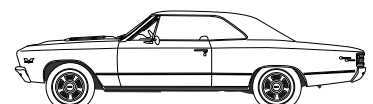
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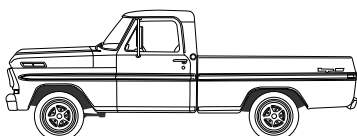
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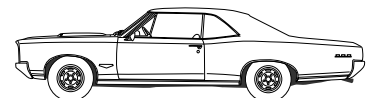
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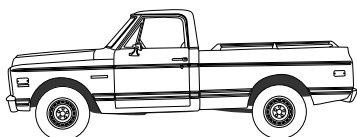
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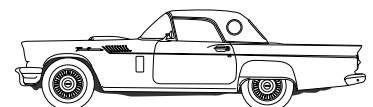
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